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AGRI-NEWS

January 6, 1997

FBMI on-line

Farm managers planning winter courses and studies can now find information on-line. The Canada/Alberta Farm Business Management Initiative (FBMI) has a new website that lists upcoming programs available throughout the province.

"The website lists all FBMI sponsored programs," says Nan Bartlett, FBMI representative. "This on-line feature makes it easier to look through the list of learning opportunities being offered."

Programs can be searched by management area or by location. For example, when looking for marketing training, click on *Marketing* and the descriptions of possible courses will appear on screen, or enter a preferred location and the programs offered in that area will be listed on screen.

"Learning opportunities are becoming much more than traditional classroom training," says Bartlett. "Programs are now being offered as publications, videos, consulting, video-conferencing and via the Internet. Some programs offer a combination of classroom and distance learning to accommodate participants who feel that interaction with other farmers is an important part of the learning experience, too."

FBMI began offering more distance learning in response to the needs assessment completed last spring. Comments received indicated that farmers and ranchers are looking for ways to learn at times and in locations that suit their busy schedule.

Farmers and ranchers with a computer and Internet access can find the FBMI website at **http://www/agric.gov.ab.ca/economic/mgmt.fbmp.html**. The site is also accessible from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's ***Ropin' the Web*** site.

To ask questions, pre-register or request more information, FBMI staff and project leaders can be contacted through e-mail from the site. More information is also available from FBMI representatives throughout the province. Contact Nan Bartlett in the Peace region at (403)835-4288, Fairview; Arla Trueblood in the northeast/northwest region at (403)954-3745, Dapp; or, Craig Smith in the south/central region at (403)626-3448, Glenwood.

Contact: Nan Bartlett at (403)835-4288

Showcase your product

An effective display is an important tool for entrepreneurs when show casing products. Displays, when designed and used correctly, can help persuade people to buy a product or service.

"Displays should be designed to attract attention and stop traffic," says Marian Williams, business development specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Knowing your customer is a necessity. Whether it's being used at the local farmers' market or a craft show, a display must be directed at your target market, the buyers. To help Alberta entrepreneurs, a *Visual Display and Merchandising Workshop* is being held in Wetaskiwin on March 13, 1997."

There are several tips that will help display your products to their best advantage. Look for props that will enhance the product and attract attention. Shelves of different heights, small

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

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SHOUT
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IT

barrels or boxes draped with fabric, baskets, trays, tree branches, trellises and peg boards are all effective and add interest, movement and energy to a display.

"Access to a display should be easy," adds Williams. "Viewers need to feel invited and welcomed into a booth space or they won't spend much time there. Space to talk, without feeling crowded, encourages customers to linger and browse. The entire booth should be bright and inviting."

If the product or business has a logo or name, use it on all signs and promotional materials. Think big when designing signs and posters. There is often only a moment or two in which to make an impression on a passing 'customer'.

"Colours and graphics should be consistent and pleasing to the eye," says Williams. "Remember to leave some 'white space', especially around the products. Simple is often the best way to go. Showcasing a few products well is far more beneficial than bunching them all together and run the risk of looking cluttered."

Name tags, t-shirts sporting the business name, aprons or another common look will help the public identify staff easily. Be an active part of your display by moving around and greeting potential customers.

The display and merchandising workshop will address questions and provide a wealth of information for beginner and experienced trade show, farmers' market and craft show exhibitors and members of breed associations. For more information on the workshop, contact Marian Williams in Camrose at (403)679-1210 or Janice McGregor in Morinville at (403)939-4351. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Contact: Marian Williams
(403)679-1210

The changing equine market place

One of the features at the *1997 Horse Breeders and Owners Conference* focuses on the changing market place horse enthusiasts do business in.

"Two speakers, in particular, will concentrate their efforts on discussing and advising conference participants on this subject," says Les Burwash, manager of equine programs with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Mr. James Keogh and Mr. Walter Robertson will be conducting sessions on the market and on the use of freshman sires."

James Keogh has been in the Thoroughbred business all his life, now operating his own consulting business. He has been a blood stock advisor for purchasing breeding stock since 1991 and was a pedigree advisor for Gainsway farms in Kentucky for 10 years prior to that. Keogh came to the U.S. from Ireland where he was associated with the Irish National Stud.

"Keogh will delve into stallion marketability during his session at the conference," says Burwash. "He will deal with the question of using freshman sires and the effect freshman sires have in the market place, down the road as well as the immediate effects."

Walter Robertson began his career in horses as a show rider. He joined the Fasig-Tipton auction company in 1975 and was appointed president of the company in 1991. Robertson has been actively involved in auctioneering since 1977.

"Taking a broad look at the horse market, Robertson will comment on what kind of horses people are interested in, the trends that are moving through the industry and where the industry is going," adds Burwash. "If you've wondered what the market is going to look like in the future, this session will be of great value."

The annual Horse Breeders and Owners Conference is being held on January 10 - 12, 1997 at the Capri Centre in Red Deer, Alberta. Registration is $75 per person.

The program agenda follows four streams of interest – Arabian, Quarter Horse, Thoroughbred and all breeds. Conference participants don't have to limit their attendance to one stream and will receive the printed materials from all sessions.

"Fourteen internationally recognized speakers are scheduled for the 1997 event," says Burwash. "A recent change in the program has made it possible for Joyce Shelley Loomis, a versatile and knowledgeable horse woman, to conduct the session on selecting the performance horse."

Loomis is actively involved in training reining and barrel racing horses. She is the only woman to have won the Miss Rodeo America title, capture top honours in the Women's Professional Rodeo Association and take world titles in the American Quarter Horse Association. She has shown barrel racing, pole bending, jumping, reining, western pleasure, English pleasure and roping event horses. Teaching and training riders and horses for performance in both rodeo and show horse disciplines are also included in her accomplishments.

Loomis is currently on the board of directors for the Pro Rodeo Association Rodeo in Silver City, New Mexico and has served on the board of directors of WPRA, BFA and Southwest Reining Horse Association.

For more information about the 1997 conference, contact Burwash in Airdrie at (403)948-8532. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator. Or, check Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Internet site for a conference schedule, speaker biographies and an on-line application form. The address is **http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/livestck/horses**. Conference information is in the *What's New* section.

Contact: Les Burwash
(403)948-8532

4-H brand permanently Alberta owned

There are many people involved in 4-H who will tell you that 4-H experiences have a special place in their heart, the many things they learned, the many friends they made and the confidence they gained during their 4-H years. For these individuals, 4-H is permanently "branded" into their lives.

"In 1981, the Alberta 4-H Council decided to establish a 'brand' identification for 4-H," says Vicki Berger, a representative of the 4-H Foundation of Alberta. "It has taken the efforts and determination of some special 4-H friends through the years to develop and register the brand. Three of these friends are Floyd Snortland, Ted Youck and the Honourable Walter Paszkowski, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development."

Floyd Snortland, a rancher in the Manyberries area, was one of the founding members of the first Alberta 4-H Council. Ted Youck of Edmonton has worked for the 4-H program through Alberta Agriculture for over two decades. These two individuals were involved in the original acquisition of the 4-H brand.

"Snortland was responsible for designing and building the brand 15 years ago," says Berger. "The Manyberries Beef Club, where Floyd and his wife Elinor were involved, made the donation of the brand to the 4-H Foundation. Then, Ted Youck, branch staff representative for the foundation, registered the brand."

Founding members saw the brand as an excellent means of marking calves to raise and sell on behalf of 4-H and the popular foundation steer program was born. Clubs throughout the province have raised and sold animals over the years with the proceeds going to further develop the Alberta 4-H Centre.

"When the Brand Act was changed recently, the foundation had to decide whether to permanently register the brand or forfeit rights to the design," adds Berger. "Snortland and Youck again took the bull by the horns and donated the registration fee to the 4-H Foundation."

Recognizing the lasting impression and positive impact 4-H has on the development of rural youth, Agriculture, Food and Rural Development Minister Walter Paszkowski generously agreed to waive the fee for the foundation.

The 4-H brand is now permanently owned by 4-H. Program members wish to thank Floyd Snortland, Ted Youck and the Honourable Walter Paszkowski for their support with this project.

Contact: *Vicki Berger*
(403)427-2541

U.S. challenge to Canada's tariff levels

The recent U.S. challenge resulted from the Uruguay Round of the GATT when Canada converted its quantitative import restrictions for dairy/poultry products, margarine and barley products to tariff rate quotas and applied them to all imports, including those from the U.S.

"Canada and the U.S. had differing views on whether the tariffs implemented by Canada could be applied to bilateral trade," says Len Ewanyk, senior policy analyst with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. The U.S. argued that in doing so, Canada violated its North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) obligations by significantly increasing tariffs and not eliminating its customs duties in accordance with the NAFTA provisions.

Canada argued the tariffs established under the Uruguay Round were consistent with trade obligations under both NAFTA and the WTO. Canada claimed these tariffs were exceptions and not subject to NAFTA general rules for tariff reduction and elimination.

"When formal consultations failed to resolve the matter, the U.S. requested that a NAFTA dispute settlement panel determine whether the measure was consistent with the provisions of the NAFTA," says Ewanyk. "After carefully considering the written legal submissions, rebuttals and evidence presented at the oral hearings, the five member NAFTA panel unanimously rejected all the U.S. legal arguments and determined that Canada's application of tariffs for the products under review conformed with the provisions of the NAFTA - no questions, no exceptions."

The NAFTA panel's final determination is binding on both countries and cannot be appealed. The panel's final report was released on December 3.

Contact: *Len Ewanyk*
(403)422-2125

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Your MAP to smart farming

Western Canada's premiere farm management conference, *Managing Agriculture for Profit* (MAP) will be celebrating its 19th year at the Capri Centre in Red Deer on January 128-30, 1997. Close to 400 of Alberta's most progressive farmers are expected to attend. The conference features timely topics, outstanding speakers and a variety of social activities, all designed to help producers make sound management decisions about the future of their farms. Speakers will cover such diverse topics as dealing with information overload, exploring cyberspace through the Internet, precision farming using Global Positioning Systems, marketing and exporting initiatives for farm businesses, and market outlooks for key commodities. Plenary session speakers will be Stephen Murgatroyd, Athabasca University; Paul Jonjack, Ocean Spray Cranberries and the U.S. National Bison Association; and, Gary Gregor, farmer and sports psychologist who helped the Saskatchewan Roughriders win the 1989 Grey Cup. Farmers and farm families can call 1-800-387-6030 for registration details.

Farm technology expo

On February 6 - 8, 1997 at the Westerner Park in Red Deer, the Alberta Conservation Tillage Society (ACTS) will host three information packed days for producers interested in conservation farming, crop production technology, nutrient cycling and biotechnology. As part of the conference, ACTS will hold its 19th annual meeting. A special feature at this year's trade show is the interactive computer displays with GIS/GPS systems and Internet demonstrations. For more information or to request a registration form, contact Pat Kennedy at (403)347-4491 in Red Deer; Keith Rideout at (403)347-8866 in Red Deer; Michelle McKinnon at (403)948-8512 in Airdrie; or Russ Evans at 1-800-251-6846.

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AGRI-NEWS

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Arable acres supplementary payment program

Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada will distribute fifty million dollars to Alberta farmland owners who were not covered under the Western Grain Transition Payments Program (WGTPP), said Walter Paszkowski, Minister of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD), today. The supplementary payment is part of the special bi-lateral agreement signed by Alberta and the federal government.

More than 90,000 applications were mailed to provincial farmers this past week. They were sent to landowners who had acreage which was ineligible under the $1.6 billion WGTPP instituted by the federal government to soften the blow of the end of the 100-year Crow rail freight subsidy in 1995.

"Alberta will be responsible for design and delivery of the $50 million Arable Acres Supplementary Payment Program (AASPP)," said Paszkowski. "I am pleased that many Alberta farmers who were not eligible for the federal Crow Benefit payout will now receive funds for all their cultivated lands."

The 90,000 AASPP applications were mailed to the owners of arable Alberta land as of February 27, 1995, according to municipal tax rolls, and who have cultivated land that was not covered under the WGTPP. One group of landowners in the mailout are those who did not return their WGTPP applications because they did not grow any eligible crops in 1994. The other group are those who, on their returned forms, said they had tame hay, forage, pasture, horticultural crops or other arable acres that were ineligible under the WGTPP rules.

AASPP applications were pre-printed with landowners' names, addresses and legal land locations. Completed applications, signed by all landowners, must be postmarked no later than February 14, 1997, to be eligible for the additional payout. A minimum of 10 eligible arable acres are required per application.

Additional information or applications may be obtained by telephoning the Arable Acres Administration office at 1-800-422-1353 (from Alberta locations) or (403) 422-9167 from outside the province.

Contact:	*Brian Hlus* *(403) 427-2137*	*Lloyd Andruchow* *(403) 427-3338*

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
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Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

Value-added initiative

Opportunities for new value-added agri-food and fibre products will get a boost from a new Alberta initiative. "I am pleased to announce the launch of this new initiative for industry research, development and commercialization," said Walter Paszkowski, Minister of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD).

The establishment of a non-profit corporation will ensure Alberta has the expertise to achieve $10 billion in primary agriculture sales and $20 billion in value-added business by the year 2005.

The initiative has three objectives:

- strengthen development of new value-added products and technology;
- address barriers to the commercialization of innovative, new agri-food and fibre products; and,
- encourage long-term growth of both the primary and processing sectors of agriculture.

The corporation will be industry-driven, with a strong focus on domestic and international market opportunities. An experienced and diverse founding board will be chosen to guide the new corporation for facilitating new product development, advancements in processing technologies, medical/health sciences agri-products, functional foods, neutraceuticals, biotechnology and industrial and manufacturing application of primary agricultural products. The board, chaired by Dr. Terry Church, will design policy regarding the operation of the corporation. The corporation may enter into research agreements with companies, universities, colleges, commodity associations and others for programs that benefit the Alberta industry. The corporation will generate sustained activity through industry funding in the form of licenses, user fees, royalties and matching contributions.

Rapidly growing markets for innovative value-added products are driving the potential growth and the future success of Alberta's agricultural industry. Primary agriculture production will benefit through stable and expanding markets for existing and new products.

World demand for consumer-ready products has grown by 137 per cent from 1980 to 1994, while trade in bulk commodities has declined 8 per cent. Consumer-ready products require a steady supply of primary commodities grown by Alberta producers. "The closer we can bring the product to being ready for the kitchen table, the greater the economic returns to Alberta," said Paszkowski.

Recent reports such as "Changing Course! The Value-Added Agri-Food and Fibre Strategy for Alberta" by Toma and Bouma Management Consultants, April '96 and "Barriers to Technology Commercialization in Alberta" by Davitech Consulting, July '96, confirm the need for a value-added facilitator. Consultation with industry and 36 Alberta agricultural organizations suggested a private sector approach to growing the industry be implemented.

"Any industry is only as strong as the weakest link in the chain. This initiative will strengthen the link between science and enterprise," said Paszkowski.

The corporation is a new model of industry promotion/partnership. AAFRD will enter into a $35 million contracted service agreement with the value-added corporation. This contribution is from internal Ministry allocations. Details regarding the structure and operation of the corporation will be determined by the Board of Directors in consultation with industry. Conditions of the Alberta Government participation stipulate that government funds shall not be used for grants, loans or loan guarantees to any for-profit companies.

The value-added initiative complements the province's overall strategy on research and economic development. It supports the goals of the Alberta Economic Development

Authority and the Alberta Science and Research Authority.

"Obtaining support and funding from industry will be a key requirement for future government financial support," Paszkowski said. "I am convinced our value-added and primary product sectors will meet and even exceed performance measures, because *agriculture is growing more than food, it is growing Alberta.*"

Contact: Ron Glen or Brian Hlus (403) 427-2137
Dr. Terry Church (403) 427-3166

Take a position

Agri-businesses and farmers in Alberta can take advantage of the first conference on precision farming offered in the province. On January 20 - 21, 1997, a *Position Yourself for Precision Farming* conference is scheduled in Taber, Alberta.

"Precision farming is an exciting innovation in field crop management," says Rob Dunn, regional conservation coordinator with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development in Lethbridge. "Both basic and advanced information on precision farming will be covered during the program."

Eighteen presenters, including farmers, researchers, soil specialists and agri-business personnel from across western Canada and the U.S., make up the agenda. A wide selection of sessions on topics ranging from yield or weed mapping to development of fertilizer prescription maps are offered. Other topics include on-farm research, variable rate controllers, and methods used to assess field variability.

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"Producers interested in maximizing yield and pin-pointing their management methods should consider attending the conference," says Dunn. "There's a lot to learn and a wealth of information to be shared on the subject of precision farming."

The conference is organized by the southern Applied Research Association, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and the Taber and District Community Adult Learning Council.

Registration is $79 and attendance is limited to 300. For more information or to register, contact the Community Adult Learning Council at (403) 223-1169 in Taber.

Contact: Rob Dunn
(403) 381-5119

20 years of home study

Twenty years ago, the first home study course, *Weed and Pest Control*, was launched. This program was under the direction of Thom Shaw, head of what was then called the Educational Programs branch.

"That first course, Weed and Pest Control, was so successful that courses on soils, forages, acreages and pork soon followed," says Faye Douglas Phillips, coordinator of the home study program with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Much has changed over the years in terms of course development and the resources available. The basic goal remains the same and that is providing rural farm families with up-to-date, affordable information that can be learned in the home, at the pace and convenience of the client."

Home study now offers over 20 courses, software programs and video kits ranging from farm bookkeeping to animal health to irrigation management to *Cowchip$* computer software. Over the years, the focus on production has shifted to a focus on financial and business planning, with an emphasis on the people side of farming.

"To celebrate the 20th anniversary of home study, we are offering up to a 20 per cent discount on selected courses," says Douglas Phillips. "The 96/97 general brochure and special offer will be mailed out in early January, 1997. Anyone not on our mailing list already can contact home study and the information will be mailed out."

The following courses are offered at a discounted price (shown) plus GST and handling for any orders being sent outside of Alberta:

- Training the Next Generation of Farm Managers – $25
- Keys to Farm Bookkeeping – $36
- Farm Estate Planning, A Family Affair – $28
- Farm Financial Planning Worksheets (FFPW) – $120
- Home Based Business, Opportunities for Farm Families – $20
- Irrigation Management Course – $24
- Crop Protection Course – $24 (includes *Weeds of Alberta* and *Herbicide Action and Injury*)

These discounted prices are only in effect until March 31, 1997. Contact home study's order desk (403) 427-2404 at anytime to leave an order on the voice mail, Visa or MasterCard are accepted. For more information, call (403) 427-2171. Government numbers are toll-free in Alberta by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Contact: Faye Douglas Phillips
(403) 427-2171

December was cold

The year of 1996 ended with cold temperatures and precipitation totals near normal.

"December started with below normal temperatures in the north and above normal temperatures in the south," says Peter Dzikowski, agri-weather resource specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Temperatures during the first half of the month remained near normal and then turned cold the second half of December."

The provincial average temperature was 5.7 degrees below the 1961 to 1990 average of -11.2 degrees C. Most Alberta locations reported monthly average temperatures two to six degrees below normal.

"The greatest temperature departures of about six degrees below normal were reported in the Foothills, between Red Deer and Claresholm," says Dzikowski. "High Level reported the smallest temperature departure, 2.8 degrees cooler than the monthly normal temperature of -20.3 degrees."

The provincial average precipitation of 22.4 mm was near normal, just 0.1 mm below the 1961 to 1990 average of 22.5. These averages are based on data recorded at 28 Environment Canada climate stations across Alberta.

In the central region of Alberta precipitation amounts of 12 to 25.8 mm, or 92 to 138 per cent of normal, were reported. The North east region also recorded above normal precipitation totals.

Most of the southern, northwest and Peace regions reported slightly below normal precipitation for December, with amounts of 7.4 to 35.7 mm, or 34 to 155 per cent of normal. Lethbridge was an exception, reporting 31 mm of precipitation, 155 per cent of the normal December precipitation of 20.1 mm.

Contact: Peter Dzikowski
(403) 422-4385

Farmers to receive GRIP refund cheques

Alberta is seeking federal approval to refund Gross Revenue Insurance Plan (GRIP) premiums to producers. The Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC) is notifying the federal government of Alberta's intention to return the producer portion of its GRIP surplus to farmers. Pending federal approval, cheques should reach farmers after final 1995 GRIP payments are made in January.

"Every farmer who put a nickel into GRIP is eligible for this refund," said Walter Paszkowski, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "This is their money. I am pleased the GRIP fund is in a surplus position as we close the books on that program." Paszkowski noted that producers whose accounts are not current with AFSC will have their bills deducted from the refund cheques.

The producer's share of the GRIP surplus is approximately $20 million, representing their share of the difference between premiums paid into the program and claims paid out of it, over the life of the program. Each cheque will reflect the farmer's share of premiums contributed to the program. Approximately 24,000 producers are eligible to receive cheques.

GRIP premiums were split among the federal government, the provincial government and the producer. The premium cost split was 33 1/3 per cent paid by producers; 25 per cent paid by the province; and 41.7 per cent paid by the federal government. Both levels of government, federal and provincial, will also receive a portion of the surplus, representing their share of premiums contributed to the program. Alberta's share is an estimated $16 million.

"The province's portion of the GRIP surplus will stay in agriculture," said Paszkowski. "The funds will be allocated to our agriculture safety net package, which includes our new value-added initiative, strengthening crop insurance and the Farm Income Disaster Program."

GRIP was introduced in 1991 and was designed to stabilize farmers' incomes by protecting the yield and price of eligible crops. The program ended in 1995, and final payments for the 1995 crop year will be made in January 1997.

Contact: *Ron Glen or Brian Hlus* *(403) 427-2137*
Brian Manning *(403) 914-0268*

4-H Leaders have been 'Going Places'

On January 10 to 12, over 300 4-H volunteer leaders from across Alberta and guests from the four western provinces and Montana, travelled to Red Deer for the 4-H Leaders Conference for a busy weekend of fun and learning. Following the theme of "Going Places with 4-H", sessions were designed for both new and experienced leaders.

"The sessions helped leaders increase their knowledge of the 4-H program, enabling them to work with youth more effectively," says Penny Wilkes, provincial 4-H leadership specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

"The conference was a great opportunity for leaders to learn from each other and to share successes," says Kathy Hougham, co-chair of the conference planning committee.

Keynote speaker, Brenda Robinson, a trainer and facilitator with 20 years of experience, used a dynamic, interactive, fun filled approach. She addressed the topic of achieving positive results in times of transition.

A highlight of the weekend was the induction of Gordon Fuhr of Morinville and Shirley Story of Sherwood Park (posthumous) into the 4-H Hall of Fame.

"Alberta Pool, United Grain Growers, Lammle's Western Wear, and Alberta Agriculture, Food, and Rural Development were major program sponsors for this 55th annual Alberta 4-H Leaders' Conference," says Wilkes. "There were numerous other supporters including: Alberta Oat Producers, Monsanto, Alberta Cattle Commission, Dairyworld, Atco, Petro Canada, Lavesta 4-H Club, Alberta 4-H Council, Camrose 4-H district council, and Lacombe 4-H district council. The partnership of government and industry allows 4-H to continue to flourish, and facilitates training functions such as this."

Alberta Leaders' conferences are open to all registered 4-H leaders in Alberta.

Contact: *Penny Wilkes or Kathy Hougham*
(403) 422-4H4H

Adding value in Alberta's northeast

It is becoming increasingly important in Alberta to not only produce top quality products but to undertake the processing of those products right here in the province. The term 'value-added' has become the cry of the decade as Alberta entrepreneurs take on an expanded role in the market place.

"Local producers and government staff have been working together to encourage value-added processing in the northeastern part of the province," says Joyce Lencucha, agri-food development consultant with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "As with all good business planning, it is important to identify a need before developing a product or service. In October 1996, the Northern Alberta Development Council commissioned a feasibility study by Toma and Bouma Management Consultants. Local food

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processors, market growers, greenhouse operators and entrepreneurs were surveyed to determine their business needs."

Results of the feasibility study are now available. The study provides a preliminary assessment of the market, technical and financial feasibility of establishing a regional food processing facility in Alberta's northeast region.

"An approved facility in the area would assist small scale processors and entrepreneurs by making specialized food processing equipment available on a fee for service basis," says Lencucha. "The development of value-added products, services, niche markets and successful food processing ventures leads to regional employment opportunities and economic growth in the area."

There will always be strong reliance on traditional agriculture in the region. Expansion of the value-added sector will not only increase the need for traditional crops and livestock, but will create opportunities for new crop development. Value-added processing encourages new industry, jobs and stronger economic activity.

"A regional food processing facility, or value-added business centre, would reduce start up costs to new entrepreneurs," says Colin Needham with the Northern Alberta Development Council. "The feasibility study shows the competitiveness and strengths of this region. It is a first step in attracting investors and identifying other viable, value-added businesses in the region."

A meeting is set for January 28 in the Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development boardroom in St. Paul to review the report.For a copy of the feasibility study, or to get involved in the regional plan for expanding value-added training and development, contact Lencucha at (403) 340-5358 or Needham at (403) 624-6350. Workshops and seminars are scheduled for the area, starting with a one-day workshop called *Opportunities Plus* on January 23 in Lac La Biche. Sessions will focus on developing value-added products, services, niche markets and will outline some of the regulations and marketing requirements producers need to be aware of. For further information about these workshops and seminars, contact Lencucha at (403) 340-5358.

Contact: Joyce Lencucha
(403) 340-5358

Opportunities Plus – exploring new agriculture ventures

Rural people are investigating, researching and creating many new and exciting ventures. Some 'go for it' jumping quickly into an idea while others plan, research and try to focus on solid opportunities.

"It's important to screen your ideas and choose opportunities with care," says Joyce Lencucha, agri-food development consultant with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Each good opportunity has its risks and problems as well."

Whether you're at the idea stage, just getting started or already in business, *Opportunities Plus* at Lac La Biche on January 23, 1997 has something to offer. The workshop is a one-day event covering a wide range of topics from aquaculture and alternative livestock to food processing, grass seed production, marketing calves and tourism.

"Lou Normand of processing services will open the conference by outlining trends and global factors that are creating opportunities for Alberta producers and processors," adds Lencucha. "A panel of speakers including: Lois Hole, author and owner of Hole's Greenhouses; Deb Hagmann, Hog Wild Specialities; Shirley Alton, Prairie Orchard Saskatoon Conserves; and, local dried flower growers and greenhouse operators Susan Plamondon, Kim Kozakavich and Sandra Simoelis, will outline the steps they took in establishing their businesses."

Market research and business planning are key factors to the success of any business and are topics included at the conference.

Opportunities Plus is a joint project of the Lac La Biche Ag Society, Lac La Biche Regional Community Development Corporation, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Alberta Northern Development Council and the MD of Bonnyville Agriculture Service Board.

Registration for this one-day workshop is $20 and includes lunch. For more information contact Harvey Yoder at (403) 623-5218 or Joyce Lencucha at (403) 340-5358.

Contact: Joyce Lencucha
(403) 340-5358

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Agri-News Briefs

Meeting consumer demands

The 1997 western regional conference of the Canadian Council of Grocery Distributers (CCGD) is planned for January 30 - 31 at the Coast Plaza Hotel in Calgary. Customer service, trends in consumer demands and the changing market place are just some of the topics to be covered by the panel of top speakers scheduled. Speakers include: Paul Inglis, member of A.T. Kearney's global strategic sourcing core team; Judith Madill, professor at Carlton University; Tom Rubel, strategist with Price Waterhouse; Judy Schultz, writer and journalist with the Edmonton Journal; David Williams, Loblaw Companies Limited and Chairman of the Board of CCGD; and, Bruce Wood head of Canadian operations with Nabisco Brands Ltd. For more information on the conference or to register, contact Bryan Walton, vice-president, western region CCGD, at (403) 250-6608 in Calgary.

Alberta farmland values increase

For the seventh consecutive time, semi-annual statistics show an increase in Canadian farmland values. The Farm Credit Corporation (FCC) has estimated that Canadian farmland values rose an average of 6.2 per cent in the six month period between January and July 1996. When combined with the 5.8 per cent increase from July 1995 to January 1996, these figures reflect a 12 per cent increase in farmland value over a 12 month period. Increases vary from province to province, with Quebec recording the highest increase of 11.2 per cent and Prince Edward Island farmland values remaining constant with no increase shown. Alberta reported in with an average increase of 5.8 per cent. For more information, contact the FCC at (306)780-8336 in Saskatchewan.

Farmers and the Internet

Farmers, agri-business persons, agricultural entrepreneurs and farm families are invited to attend a one-day, non-technical seminar about using the Internet. *A Farmer's Guide to the Information Highway*, is being offered in 20 locations around the province from January 20 to mid-March. Presenters from Steppingstones Partnership Inc. and rural development specialists will show you how to use the Internet and other services, how to find market, program and other useful agricultural information, and how you can market your products and services around the world. The 'information highway' can provide support, information and educational opportunities to farm families. This is an information packed seminar for Albertans who want their farms to be more successful and profitable. Seminars dates in 1997 are:

Leduc	January 20	Red Water	January 21
Barrhead	January 22	Vegreville	January 23
Lac La Biche	January 28	Lethbridge	February 1
Medicine Hat	February 4	Brooks	February 5
Hanna	February 6	Crossfield	February 10
Lacombe	February 11	Rocky Mtn. House	February 12
Stettler	February 13	Camrose	February 24
Killam	February 25	Wainwright	February 26
St. Paul	February 27	Peace River	March 10
Fairview	March 11	Grande Prairie	March 12

Seminar brochures are available at all district offices of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. For additional information, contact Delin Sheehan-Millang, rural development specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, at (403) 556-4220 in Olds, call toll-free 1800-267-9997, or look up detailed information on the seminar on the Internet at **http://www.steppingstones.ab.ca**.

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AGRI-NEWS

January 20, 1997

Smart farming

Along with day to day, on-site issues, today's farmers must deal with the pressures caused by global competition, technology changes and massive loads of information. Ideas for relieving this pressure can be found at *Managing Agriculture for Profit* (MAP '97), western Canada's premier conference dealing with successful farm management, which runs from January 28 to 30, 1997 at the Capri Centre in Red Deer.

"The theme of MAP' 97 is Smart Farming," says Rich Smith, an agriculture engineer with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and member of the MAP '97 marketing and sponsorship committee. "Making sound farm management decisions in this intense, rapidly changing environment is a real challenge. The conference will give producers three days of valuable information, lively discussion and social activities designed to help them reach the smart farming goal."

Close to 400 of Alberta's most progressive farmers are expected to attend MAP '97. In its 18-year history, MAP has attracted over 6,000 participants.

"A vital element in the success of MAP has been programs featuring timely topics and outstanding speakers," says Smith. "This year is no exception. A wide variety of important topics follow the three daily themes: Information and Technology; Business Development; and, Market Outlook."

The opening plenary session by Professor Stephen Murgatroyd, Athabasca University, provides ideas on how to sail through the sea of information without drowning. A second day plenary session features a presentation on creating and maintaining markets by Paul Jonjack, a lawyer who played a strong role in the success of Ocean Spray Cranberries and is currently president of the US National Bison Association. The conference concludes with a talk on developing a winning attitude by Gary Gregor, a farmer and sports psychologist who helped the Saskatchewan Roughriders win the 1989 Grey Cup.

"Daily sessions include presentations on precision farming using Global Positioning Systems, making the Internet work for farmers, capturing Asian markets, and effective business arrangements," adds Smith. "Current issues such as value-based marketing of beef, environmental law and the mad cow crisis in England will also be covered. As always, one of the most popular features of MAP is the opportunity to hear analysts assess market outlooks for beef, grain and special crops."

MAP '97 promises to be a valuable experience for farmers and farm families who want to stay on the leading edge of the agriculture industry. Registration details are available by calling Lynn Poole, toll-free at 1-800-387-6030.

Contact:	*Rich Smith*	*Lynn Poole*
	(403)948-8537	*1-800-387-6030*

This Week

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

Feasting on Alberta

A special feature of the *Managing Agriculture for a Profit*, MAP '97, conference package is Feasting on Alberta. The event is scheduled for Wednesday evening, January 29, 1997. Each year Alberta food products are featured at MAP and previous participants have given the feast top marks.

"This year Feasting on Alberta is set in an ethnic atmosphere," says Joyce Lencucha, agri-food development consultant with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Alberta food products are competing successfully in the international market place. This event will introduce some of the ethnic foods being processed in the province to conference participants."

The international flavours of several Alberta food processors will be served, including: pasta dishes from Delizia Pasta Ltd. in Calgary; potatoes from Bassano Growers Ltd.; chicken fajitas from Sepp's Fine Foods Ltd. at Innisfail accompanied by fiesta reca salsa made by Something Special Deli Foods of Sherwood Park; perogies from Dan-Dan's Food Products and sausages from Red Deer processor Baiers Meats; prepared Chinese food dishes from Lipkey Foods served with sauces made by Wings Foods of Alberta in Edmonton; and many more.

"Feasting on Alberta is absolutely too delicious to miss," says Lencucha. "It is an excellent chance to celebrate and taste the bounty provided by Alberta producers and processors."

Family and friends wishing to join conference participants for this international smorgasbord can purchase additional tickets for $25. For further information on the conference, contact the registration committee at 1-800-387-6040.

Contact: *Joyce Lencucha*
(403)340-5358

Environmental Education for Youth

The Alberta Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) is sponsoring a program, Environmental Education for Youth: Opportunities and Resources, on February 1, 1997, in conjunction with its annual meeting.

"The purpose of the program is to provide a forum where organizations, societies and individuals involved in the environmental education of young people can share information, exchange ideas and explore opportunities for partnerships," says Leon Marciak, soil conservation specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and president-elect of the Alberta Chapter of the SWCS.

The SWCS is an international, nonprofit, multi-disciplinary organization for natural resource management professionals and practitioners. It is the principal forum for soil and water conservation information, education and advocacy.

The Alberta Chapter of SWCS has concentrated on developing K-12 educational materials since 1989. Products include an award winning puppet kit, a poster series and a high school science resource kit.

The one-day program includes representatives from government, nonprofit organizations, educators and the private sector. Displays of products and services are also planned.

"Presentations on curricula and outreach initiatives are included in the day's program," says Marciak. "The day will wrap-up with a speaker addressing the issue *Are the needs being met*. There is no charge for attending this program and anyone with an interest is invited."

The program is being held from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m., Saturday, February 1, 1997 at the J.G. O'Donoghue Building (Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development) 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton.

For more information, contact Bruce Walker, chairman of the meeting, at (403)495-6122, e-mail the Alberta Chapter at **swcsalta@compusmart.ab.ca**, or visit the SWCS Alberta Chapter website at **http://www.compusmart.ab.ca/swcsalta**

Contact: *Leon Marciak*
(403)427-3689

Greenhouse crop growers ready for a new season

For Alberta greenhouse crop growers, spring is already on its way. The shortest day, December 21, has passed and now we're gaining sunlight every day.

"Winter is a busy season for greenhouse crop growers as crops are planted and tended to ensure fresh produce in early spring," says Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza greenhouse crops specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Peppers are seeded in mid-October so the fruit can be harvested in March. It takes about 140 days from seeding before the first peppers can be brought to market. Tomatoes take about 110 days and seedless cucumbers take about 60 days to first harvest."

It takes good light, proper temperature and adequate amounts of nutrients to produce greenhouse vegetables. The process begins far before the product appears in stores. Growers in Alberta have to contend with low light and very cold winter temperatures.

During 1997, at least 95 per cent of the greenhouse vegetable crops will be grown in sawdust. This is a change from 1996 when rockwool was popular. Some growers will be using Styrolite as a growing medium for tomatoes.

"Growing crops through winter is a challenge and growers have to make sure that their plants are comfortable and

Cont'd on page 3

growing properly," adds Mirza. "Plants can become vegetative very quickly if the amount of water is not restricted, which means the development of fewer fruits. Scientists at the Crop Diversification Centres North and South have developed crop management techniques to grow crops under winter light conditions and Alberta growers are using those techniques successfully."

It's not only vegetable crops that are seeded in fall and winter. A major shift took place in Alberta's tree nurseries during the past two years resulting in tree seedlings being seeded in the first week of January. Many greenhouse operators are now growing seedlings for June planting rather than putting them in a freezer in November and planting the following season.

While all looks quiet outside of the greenhouses and nurseries, inside they are buzzing with activity.

Contact: *Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza* *(403)422-1789*
Jim Calpas *(403)362-1312*

Visions for the Peace – the second challenge

Two years ago in 1995, members of the Fairview Marketing Club, the Fairview College and the North Peace Forage Association put together the first Visions for the Peace conference. It was an opportunity for 200 farmers, ranchers and agri-businesses to hear what experts thought the future of agriculture would be and focus on that future.

"Now the focus is on being part of that future and 'doing it'," says Rob Little, a mixed farmer in the Fairview area and one of the conference organizers. "We've thought about what we could do and should do, this conference will help us see how we can do it."

The second Visions conference takes place on February 5 and 6, 1997 in Fairview. The conference is being planned by local farmers and Fairview College with funding form the Farm Business Management Initiative (FBMI).

Conference speakers will include: keynote speaker, Dr. Tim Ball, professor of climatology at the University of Winnipeg; Kim McConnell of Fieldstone Marketing, sharing the challenges he sees facing agriculture; Dave Plett, Western Feedlots Ltd., speaking on how they've changed their operation to work with industry changes; Errol Anderson, Palliser Commodities Corporation, with a market outlook; and Richard Wright of Quadra Group, on partnering with non-traditional farm investors. One of the conference highlights is a panel discussion on transportation and value-added, featuring local producers and representatives from industry.

"During the conference, we'll be looking for the practical and real aspects of handling change," adds Little. "There will be time scheduled after each speaker for participants to ask questions and discuss what they've heard. A meet the speakers session is also planned for the evening of the 5th, following the banquet."

For information, contact Little at (403)835-4553 or Stu Leitch, P.Ag. at (403)835-6644.

Contact *Rob Little*
(403)835-4553

Fruitful industry on the grow

The Alberta berry crop industry continues to grow. To meet the demand for production information, the 11th annual Commercial Berry Production School is scheduled for February 4 to 5, 1997 at the North Hill Inn, Red Deer.

"The school provides basic information for those entering the industry and the latest developments and recommendations on production and marketing of berry crops," says Lloyd Hausher, berry crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Established and experienced producers will give brief overviews of how they got started and their current operations."

After an introduction to the industry and its growth potential, day one will concentrate on both Junebearing and day-neutral strawberry production. Individual topics discussed include: variety selection, plant sources, plant spacing, establishment, fertility, crop management, harvesting, yields, irrigation, weed, diseases and insect control.

The second day will cover similar topic areas for both summer-fruiting and fall fruiting raspberries and saskatoons.

"The Berry School is co-sponsored by the Alberta Market Gardeners Association (AMGA)," says Hausher. "Registration is available at the door for single or both days. Non AMGA member rates are $45 per person per day or $85 per person for both days. Registration starts at 8:00 a.m. each day."

For more information on berry production or for registration in the school, contact Hausher at (403)362-1309. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Contact: *Lloyd Hausher*
(403)362-1309

Applied precision farming

After the January 20 - 21, 1997 *Position Yourself for Precision Farming* conference, farmers are invited to take the follow-up course *Applied Precision Farming*

"Many new technologies that can be used to improve management skills are being made available," says Craig Smith, FBMI representative for the south and central regions. "The challenge is to identify the ones that will provide the most benefit to the bottom line of each individual farm."

Cont'd on page 4

The course looks at the latest computer software incorporating field mapping and other enterprise variables for managing resources more efficiently and specifically.

"This will be a very hands on course with every participant having a chance to use the computer and the software so that when they return to their own operation they'll have many of the skills needed to implement the technology," says Smith.

The technology the participants were exposed to at the conference will also be examined to determine the financial feasibility of its use on farms. Different programs will be looked at to see how they can improve management by reducing costs, effectively enhancing resources and helping the bottom line.

The course will be held at the Lethbridge Community College. Sessions are one night a week for six weeks, January 29, February 5, February 11, February 19, February 26 and March 5. Registration is $150 per person (no GST).

For more information or to register to participate in the course, contact Gordon Williams at the Lethbridge Community College (403)320-3313, the Taber district office of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (403)223-7907, or Craig Smith, FBMI representative (403)626-3448.

Contact: *Craig Smith*
(403)626-3448

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1997 Rural Crime Watch provincial workshop

The Rural Crime Watch (RCW) workshop is being held January 31 and February 1, 1997 at the Westlock and District Community Hall, 10711 - 104 Avenue, Westlock, (along Hwy 44 north). Registration and a wine and cheese reception take place on Friday evening from 7:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. A full day of sessions begins at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday. Sessions include farm safety; streetwise; drug awareness; youth justice; scam proofing; estate planning; fundraising; and, volunteerism. The 1997 RCW workshop is hosted by the Westlock and District RCW and the Barrhead RCW organizations with assistance from the Fort Assiniboine Organization. Registration is $30 per person. For further information or to register for the workshop, contact Laura Linnell at (403)349-4421, Westlock.

Courses at the Garden

The scenic Devonian Botanic Garden, located southwest of Edmonton on Hwy 60, offers a variety of courses year-round. Courses offered in February and March, 1997 include: greenhouse production - February 8; apple orchards - February 8; woody ornamentals for tree farms and shelterbelts - February 15; commercial tissue culture - February 22; operating a small-scale greenhouse - March 1; native plants nursery - March 1; landscape property maintenance - March 8; dried flowers - March 15; medicinal plants for profit -March 15; woodlot management - March 21; and, pond raising rainbow trout - March 22. There is a fee for all courses. For more information, a free brochure outlining all courses offered, or to register for a course, contact the Garden at (403)987-2064, Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Alberta's Dixon scholar named

The Canadian Simmental Association (CSA), through the Dr. Allan Dixon Scholarship Fund, presented three $1,000 post-secondary education scholarship awards at the 28th annual meeting of the CSA. Recipients were Tanya Beech, Pilot Mound, Manitoba; Jason Charles, Stoughton, Saskatchewan; and, **Maureen Mappin** of Mappin Simmentals in Byemoor, Alberta. All three recipients grew up on rural cattle farms, were active in 4-H clubs and are members of the Young Canadian Simmental Association. Mappin, 20, studies at the University of Alberta, Edmonton and plans to graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture in 1998. The Dr. Allan Dixon Scholarship Fund was set up in 1976 to recognize scholastic achievement and encourage further education. Since that date, 74 students have been presented scholarships. In memory of the late Dr. Dixon, former CSA president and pioneer leader in Canadian Simmental, the awards are presented annually to students directly involved with the Simmental industry. For further information, contact Barry Bennett, general manager, CSA, (403)250-7979, Calgary.

AGRI-NEWS

January 27, 1997

Winter calving, scours and water quality

Calves that are stressed from either the cold or other health related problems tend to have scours.

"*Cryptosporidium*, an intestinal parasite, is relatively common in newborn calves with diarrhea," says Dr. Murray Kennedy, parasitologist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Yellow, smelly, mucousy scours can contain billions of *Cryptosporidium* oocysts (eggs). This parasite is transmitted through ingestion of fecally contaminated food or water. *Cryptosporidium* attacks the cells lining the intestine of many warm blooded animals, hampering their ability to absorb water and nutrients thereby causing profuse watery diarrhea. Calves with healthy immune systems recover over time. Infections in newborn calves with weakened immune systems (calves stressed from the cold or from a lack of clean bedding) can be serious or even fatal. Therefore, scours can affect the survival rate of your calves and your bottom line."

The parasite is not species specific. People can also become infected with *Cryptosporidium*. Last spring, *Cryptosporidium* caused large outbreaks of gastrointestinal illness in three communities in Canada, including Cranbrook, BC; Kelowna, BC; and, Collingwood, Ontario. Larger and more frequent outbreaks of *Cryptosporidium* have prompted health authorities to track this parasite and identify possible sources.

Symptoms of cryptosporidiosis in humans include profuse watery diarrhea, abdominal cramps, nausea, low-grade fever, dehydration, and weight loss. Currently there is no cure for cryptosporidiosis, so recovery from the disease depends upon an individual's own immune system. People with normal immune systems recover over time; however, in infants, the elderly and people with weakened immune systems, such as cancer or AIDS patients, the infection can be serious and even fatal.

As most Albertans get their drinking water from surface waters, the proper handling of manure and runoff from wintering and calving sites becomes important in safeguarding against any threat to public health and any threat to agriculture's clean image in Alberta and Canada.

"Removing the parasite through filtration is an important part of the water treatment process because *Cryptosporidium* is highly resistant to chemical disinfectants like chlorine," says Sandra Cooke, water quality research officer with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Since Cranbrook's water treatment system does not include a filtering process, *Cryptosporidium* was not effectively removed from the raw water supply. In Alberta, naturally turbid prairie rivers, the source of most drinking water, requires filtration to bring water up to a drinking water quality standard."

During periods of high runoff (i.e. spring runoff), drinking water treatment plants are under stress to remove more sediment and particulate material. However, having a filtration

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Alberta
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Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

system does not always prevent problems. If the filtering process in the water treatment plant is not working properly to remove very small particulate material, the threat of *Cryptosporidium* remains.

Many rural Albertans get their drinking water from surface water supplies (e.g. dugouts) without any filtration and minimal treatment. This represents a significant health risk to farmers and their families. Manure management practices that prevent runoff to water sources are necessary to safeguard drinking water supplies.

Cryptosporidium can impact public health: the public's perception of the source of *Cryptosporidium* can impact agriculture's clean image even though human sewage and wildlife are also sources. For example, the outbreak of Cryptosporidiosis in Cranbrook, BC, peaked just two weeks after 400-head of cattle were released onto the watershed that fed the towns' water supply. As a result, public health officials ordered the cattle removed from the upstream watershed, streambeds to be cleaned up, and a plan developed requiring ranchers to keep cattle at least 30 metres away from feeder streams. Although cattle could not be directly linked to the cause of this outbreak, preventative measures were taken. The Alberta Cattle Commission initiated a proactive educational effort after other water treatment problems were linked to spring runoff and the possible contamination by manure.

"A series of *Better Water, Better Beef* seminars were conducted throughout the North Saskatchewan River basin to inform and educate farmers on the impacts of manure runoff on water quality and the benefits associated with clean water and beef production," says Charlie Westra, producer and chair of the public affairs committee for the Alberta Cattle Commission. "The underlying message of the Alberta Cattle Commission's seminars was that proactive management reduces the risk of pollution and maintains the 'Rocky Mountain' clean image Alberta beef producers market to Alberta and world consumers."

Preventative manure management practices can reduce the risk of cryptosporidiosis to farmers, their families and the public. Also, calves infected with *Cryptosporidium* will affect production. To reduce calf losses to *Cryptosporidium* and minimize their stress:

- provide lots of clean, dry bedding; and,
- isolate calves with scours.

To prevent manure from reaching water sources:

- keep calving sites away from streams, lakes and ground water wells;
- prevent manure runoff at snowmelt from reaching streams; and,
- water cows and calves off-stream.

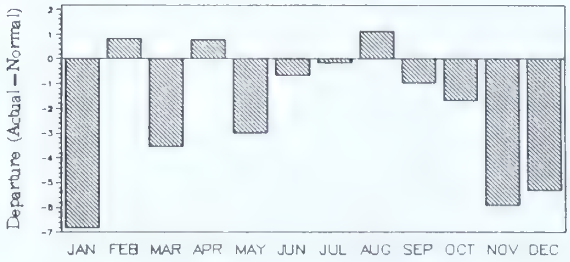
Contact: *Sandra Cooke – (403)427-3397*
Dr. Murray Kennedy – (403)427-6535
Neil MacAlpine – (403)427-3779

1996, an interesting year for Alberta farmers

Alberta was cool and wet in 1996. The 1996 average annual temperature was 2.1 degrees cooler than the average for the 1961 to 1990 period. The province averaged 482.4 mm of precipitation, 24 mm above the long term average. These averages are based on data recorded at 29 Environment Canada climate stations across Alberta.

"In many parts of the province conditions differed quite a bit from what the provincial averages show," says Peter Dzikowski, agri-weather resource specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "For example, the annual total precipitation at Bow Island was 238 mm, 72 per cent of its long term average. This was typical for much of southern Alberta and the northern Peace region. In contrast, Whitecourt received more than three times that amount, 742.5 mm which was 128 per cent of its 1961 to 1990 average. Ballater reported the greatest precipitation departure, receiving 705.3 mm, 150 per cent of it's long term average."

For the province as a whole, the year began and ended with temperatures much below normal. April was warm, while May and June were below to near normal providing a late start to the growing season. July temperatures and precipitation totals were near normal, hiding the real weather story.



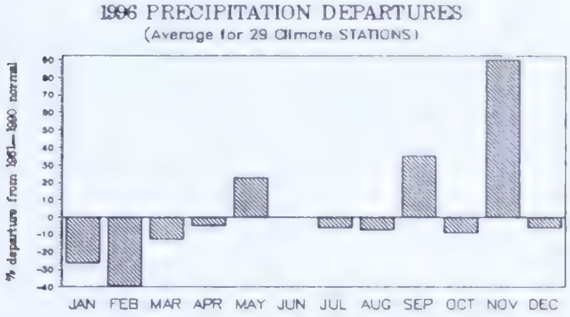
1996 TEMPERATURE DEPARTURES
(Average for 29 Climate STATIONS)

"Crops in southern and central regions showed signs of drought stress while excess moisture stressed crops in the Peace and northern central regions," says Dzikowski. "The cool, cloudy summer raised concerns of a late maturing crop and increased risk of frost damage reducing quality. In addition, severe summer weather caused damage to crops and property in parts of Alberta. There were reports of hail, damaging winds, funnel clouds and flooding in northern Alberta."

Warm sunny weather returned in August providing much needed heat for the late developing crops. The first widespread frost occurred between September 20 and 23, about one week later than the normal first fall frost date.

Cont'd on page 3

Precipitation was below normal for the first four months of the year. Precipitation was normal to above normal in May and June, providing plenty of moisture for the crops to get established. However, high soil moisture and cool temperatures delayed seeding operations and slowed crop growth and development.



"June, which is typically the wettest month of the year was the wettest month in 1996, with an average of 77.5 mm of rain, about normal for the month," adds Dzikowski. "A cool wet summer raised concerns about too little heat for crop development during the critical grain filling stage."

Most regions received significant rains in May, June and July providing adequate moisture for crop growth. However, the below normal temperatures during the spring and summer slowed seeding operations, germination, crop growth and development.

Excess moisture in northern Alberta slowed down haying operations in the summer while the southern region reported the lowest precipitation totals for July and August, about 25 to 75 per cent of normal, causing drought stress in dryland crops.

August was warm and dry, helping crops mature after the cool wet summer. September was cool and wet in most of Alberta slowing harvest operations.

"September began with below normal temperatures after hot, record breaking weather the last week of August," says Dzikowski. "The hot weather returned the second week of September providing a brief period of good harvest weather. During the third week of September cool, wet weather returned to most of Alberta. Temperatures were two to four degrees below normal for the rest of the month."

Growing degree day totals for April 1 to September 29 were one week behind in the southern and north west regions, 12 days behind in the north east region and two weeks behind in the central and Peace regions.

A cool October slowed harvest operations and fall field work, in most of Alberta. Excess moisture slowed down harvesting and drying operations in the northwest and Peace regions. November, which is usually the second driest month of the year received an average of 38.2 mm, about double the normal precipitation.

The year ended with two months of cold weather. November and December temperatures were about five to six degrees below normal.

"The provincial averages present a simple overall picture of what happened. Details, found in the monthly data, help understand the type of year it was. From a crop perspective, 1996 was cool and wet."

Contact: *Peter Dzikowski*
(403)422-4385

Keep a sharp eye on safety

Agriculture sharps waste includes needles, syringes, pharmaceutical bottles and related items that could cause punctures or cuts. An evaluation project on the disposal of agricultural sharps in Alberta was initiated last spring. An overview of some current practises and concerns is now available in the project's final report.

"Needle injuries are quite common," says Eric Jones, farm safety specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Of the Alberta farmers participating in the project, 64 per cent received some kind of needle injury during the year."

During the project, feedlots were provided with disposal drums for their sharps and five disposal alternatives were piloted in different communities.

"Survey participants had many suggestions on how to prevent needle injuries," says Jones. "Greater awareness of the hazards of working with sharps and decreasing the number of injuries was the main reason for the project. Environmental safety, proper incineration of the materials involved and a positive, responsible image of livestock producers and the cattle sector are additional benefits."

During the project, hard plastic containers of different sizes were supplied to 100 producers. The producers were to rate the containers on convenience, cost and types of lids. The most popular size of container is the five-gallon pail for all waste. Some participants chose to separate needles into smaller containers and use a separate pail for all other materials.

Disposal methods were also tested. The most common disposal practice was to burn sharps waste with regular garbage and then take it to a landfill. Each of the five participating districts were asked to try different disposal methods.

"The suggestions for disposal methods received were mostly to make it easier for producers to adopt safe sharps disposal," says Jones. "This includes convenient and regular local drop-off sites. Drayton Valley Municipal Landfill has a drop-off area for sharps waste beside their pesticide collection container site that is convenient and efficient. Drop-off location at local veterinary clinics where producer sharps are placed in

Cont'd on page 4

with the clinic's sharps waste also seemed to work well. Better, safer alternatives are what's needed."

Strathmore and the Lethbridge area have a producer drop-off at their landfills where sharps waste is picked up and incinerated at BOVAR Biomedical. Many individual producers and feedlots have already arranged specifically for BOVAR Biomedical pick up on their site and incineration of all sharps waste, they are billed accordingly.

"The sharps project was effective in promoting safety and taking responsible care of this type of waste," adds Jones. "Many of the participating producers are continuing with a sharps disposal program by recycling old plastic containers on their farms and utilizing the labels supplied by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and BOVAR Biomedical or by arranging for safe disposal and incineration."

For a copy of the Farm Safety SHARPS Project final report, or for more information on the project and farm safety, contact Eric Jones at (403)427-4231. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Contact: Eric Jones
(403)427-4231

Horse breeders and owners meet in Red Deer

Almost 500 Albertans gathered in early January to attend this year's *Alberta Horse Breeders and Owners Conference*. The two-day event held in Red Deer was packed with knowledgable, interesting speakers and session choices.

"In conversation with several attendees, to a person, they were very impressed with the variety and depth of the speakers on the agenda and with how smoothly the conference progressed," says Lee Anne Palutke, Agri-News editor with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "From registration to session and display set up, it was evident the organizing committee has conference planning down to an art."

The organizing committee is headed by Les Burwash, manager of equine programs, and Bob Coleman, horse specialist, both with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, and includes representatives from breed associations. Conference sessions included insightful looks at the changing horse market and where buyer preferences are leaning as well as several sessions on health and the care of mares, foals and performance horses. Training the horse, sport science for the rider and a panel discussion on assessing athletic movement in horses, made for lively discussion.

"Sharing information and just being in the company of hundreds of Albertans involved in the horse industry, sport and hobby, was a great way to spend two days," adds Palutke. "The conference ended on a very positive note with a presentation on things families can do to enjoy horses together."

This annual conference is supported by a number of sponsors: Canadian Dehydrators Association, Champion Pet Feeds, Horse Publications Group, MSD Agvet, Wild Rose Equine Ranching Association (NAERIC member), the Jones Boys Saddlery and Western Wear, United Farmers of Alberta, the Alberta Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

"We are very grateful to our sponsors for their help in making the conference such a success," says Burwash. "For the past five years, donations have been made to the Western College of Veterinary Medicine, Saskatoon, from conference proceeds. The college is a leader in equine research and has always made its research findings available which is valuable to all horse owners and breeders. This support to the college to help fund equine research will continue this year.

The Horse Owners and Breeders Conference is held each year in January. It has become known as one the premier horse conferences in North America. Speakers are already being confirmed for next year's event on January 9 - 11, 1998.

Contact: Lee Anne Palutke (403)422-6958
Les Burwash (403)948-8532

Grazing in the winter

Dormant season grazing allows cows to find all or part of their feed during the months when forages are dormant in late fall, winter or early spring. Winter feed is the single largest expense in producing a beef calf. Every additional day of grazing in the dormant season means considerable cost savings.

"For cattle to successfully graze without sacrificing health, growth and productivity requires advance planning," says Lorne Erickson, forage specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Just having extra pasture and allowing it to grow all season without grazing or cutting may satisfy the quantity requirements, but the quality of these grasses may not allow the animals to perform to their potential. To have enough high-quality dormant pasture means that a plan must be in place at the beginning of the growing season."

Pasture management practices and the type of forages should be considered when planning for dormant season grazing. Data has been collected by the Grey Wooded Forage Association and Myron Bjorge and Grant Lastiwka, forage specialists with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. Results to date show that the highest quality forage is more immature and grown under higher fertility. Ideal quality and quantity for most species is achieved when the last cutting or grazing occurs in late June or early July. Species that exhibit rapid regrowth, like alfalfa, meadow brome grass and orchard grass could be cut later in July if moisture and fertility are high.

Cont'd on page 5

Low growing plants that can stay under snow cover for longer periods and that have finer leaf tend to hold their quality. Some examples are: meadow brome, orchard grass, Kentucky bluegrass and creeping red fescue. Plants that fall to the ground with frost and snow also hold their quality well. Tall growing, broader leafed plants or ones with poor leaf attachment do not maintain their quality as well. These include: more mature smooth brome, timothy and alfalfa.

"Once a high quality dormant pasture is created, it can be used in a number of ways," says Erickson. "In the fall, dormant grass can be used first for weaning calves and later dry cows can clean up what the calves left behind. This pasture land is a low stress environment as it is familiar to the calf and can result in better daily gain the first month after weaning Chances of disease are often less, as well."

If dormant grass is not used in fall, dry cows can graze it through the snow with some supplemental feed. Cows can calve and feed on it in April and May or it can be grazed by yearlings or cow-calf pairs starting in April.

Start planning at the beginning of the season if you plan to try banking forage for dormant season grazing.

Contact: *Lorne Erickson* *Grant Lastiwka*
1-800-785-6546 *1-800-785-6546*

Agri-News Briefs

Call for nominations for Alberta's pork industry leaders

Each year, the Alberta Pork Congress (APC) presents three awards: Herdsman of the year; Progressive Pork Producer; and, Pork Industry Leadership Award. The APC awards program acknowledges individuals who contribute the most to the pork industry of Alberta. Announcement of this year's award winners will be made at the APC banquet on Wednesday, March 19, 1997 at the Capri Hotel in Red Deer. Deadline for nominations is January 31, 1997. Nomination kits are available through the APC office at (403)244-1487. For further information, contact Lisa Volk, assistant manager, APC at (403)244-4487.

Burrowing rodent damage control workshop

On March 19 and 20, 1997, a workshop designed for land managers, researchers and extension and service personnel will be held at the Convention Inn, Edmonton. Leading authorities, researchers and experts from across Canada and U.S. will present information and the latest research and developments in reducing burrowing rodents on agricultural and public lands. Subjects include: health and safety regulations for pesticide use; biology and behaviour of burrowing rodents; and, performance evaluation of current rodent damage control techniques and rodenticides. The two-day agenda of over 15 speakers and presentations features Dr. Robert Timm, University of California; John O'Brien, Nevada Department of Agriculture; Dr. Gail Michener, University of Lethbridge; Monty Sullins, Montana Department of Agriculture. Registration fees are $120 per person. Space is limited and registration is on a first come basis. For further information or to register for the workshop, contact John Bourne, vertebrate pest specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, at (403)853-8225, Vermilion.

Organic production and marketing conference

On February 27 - 28, 1997, Olds College is holding a conference on organic production and marketing. Conference sessions cover the local, national and international market for organic products and how to become a certified organic producer or processor. Producers and scientists are hosting a workshop to show production techniques applicable to the livestock, field crops and horticulture sectors. An organic trade show is planned in conjunction with the workshop. Registration fees of $225 cover, the two-day conference, organic lunches and a conference binder. Fees for students are $75. To register, contact Geraldine Byrne (403)556-8254, fax (403)556-4710, at the Olds College. To reserve a trade show table, contact Raphael Thierrin (403)668-3310, fax (403)686-0075, or e-mail **raphael@nucleus.com**.

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AGRI-NEWS

February 3, 1997

Feeds grown on saline areas

Dryland salinity is a serious concern. In Alberta approximately one million hectares of dryland soils are affected.

"A recommended practice to reclaim degraded soils in Alberta is seeding salt-tolerant crops, particularly forages," said Don Wentz, soil salinity specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD). "Concentrations of major and trace elements in forages grown on saline soils often differ considerably from those grown on normal range. These forages may not meet the nutritive needs of cattle and may limit their production, or be so high in minerals that they can have adverse health effects."

In western Canada, while chemical composition of forages and feed grains has been determined, few studies have examined the composition of plants grown in saline areas, particularly regarding the mineral requirements of beef cattle. To answer this need, Dr. Jim Miller, soil and water specialist with the Lethbridge Research Centre; Bill Read, soil and water technologist AAFRD; Dan Heaney, agronomy unit program leader AAFRD; and, Don Wentz, sampled plants from 102 salt-affected sites in southern and central Alberta between 1990 and 1993.

"Sites sampled had all been previously cultivated and ranged from side-hill seeps to those affected by artesian discharge," said Wentz. "Plant samples were collected from locations with the highest apparent soil salinity and included tame and weedy grasses, alfalfa, cereals, clover and plant mixtures. They were then analysed for various major and trace elements. Concentrations were compared with the minimum requirements and maximum tolerable levels for beef cattle."

Results showed that in feeds grown on saline areas; zinc concentrations were most frequently (94% of sites) below the minimum requirement for beef cattle, followed by copper (92%), selenium (87%), sodium (49%), manganese (29%), potassium (21%), magnesium (3%), iron (1%) and sulphur (1%). The element most frequently exceeding the maximum tolerable level for beef cattle was sulphur (20%), followed by magnesium (17%), aluminum (5%), iron (5%) and molybdenum (1%).

"Research findings indicate that if beef cattle are fed mostly hay from saline areas, consideration should be given to supplementing their mineral diet with zinc, copper and selenium, and possibly sodium, manganese and potassium," said Wentz. "It is recommended that if producers are considering using significant amounts of forage from saline areas it should be analysed and rations balanced accordingly."

Contact: Don Wentz
(403)381-5862

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

That's snow way to treat wastewater

Alberta's long, cold winters might become an ideal time for treating wastewater from food processing industries or even liquid manures. Delta Engineering Ltd., Ottawa, has adapted a fun technology, making artificial snow for ski resorts, into a new technology to treat wastewater. Researchers at Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development and the Alberta Research Council-Vegreville are initiating pilot tests to make snow from food processing wastewater and liquid hog manure to evaluate the effectiveness of Delta Engineering's technology on nutrient rich wastewater.

"Snowfluent™ can treat wastewater from municipal, industrial and agricultural sources and achieve a large reduction and removal of chemicals, heavy metals, organic loads and suspended solids," said Jeff White, president/CEO of Delta Engineering. "Snowfluent™ uses a combination of freeze-crystallization and snowmaking to provide a better than tertiary quality treatment of wastewater at a very competitive cost.

"The treatment process freezes water into tiny ice pellets and contaminants either precipitate out or slowly volatilize into the atmosphere from the snow. During spring runoff, clean meltwater from the snowpack either infiltrate the soil or drain off the site if it meets water quality standards. The precipitated nutrients remain behind in a lined lagoon as solids, as a concentrated brine that can be collected for more treatment, or can be used as fertilizer to grow crops."

Snowfluent™ is a Canadian-made technology making the most of our cold Canadian climate. Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development has partnered with Westcan Malting Ltd, Alix, to research the feasibility of treating their wastewater by making snow. "Snowfluent™ is an innovative technology that we think might be useful for Alberta food processors" said Neil MacAlpine, project manager with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Food processing wastewater usually contains a lot of nutrients that make traditional methods such as biological treatment in lagoons less effective during the winter."

"Snowfluent™ would give us an option to treat our wastewater year round" said Gordon Tilley, vice-president operations, Westcan Malting. "Snowfluent™ also puts the nutrients in the water back on the land to grow crops. We like that aspect of Snowfluent™. As food processors, we look at the nutrients in our wastewater as a resource not a waste. This technology would help us close the loop between food processing, nutrients and growing food. It would also reduce winter storage volumes and problems associated with storage of wastewater."

Westcan Malting is looking at another wastewater treatment system for their Alix operations. Snowfluent™ may be a viable wastewater treatment option in the future.

Many hog producers in Alberta are faced with increasing public pressure focused on odour and water contamination issues. Alberta's long winters require large lagoons for liquid manure storage and forces manure spreading into a short growing season.

"Snowfluent™ is an interesting alternative to treat liquid hog manure" said Alberta Pork Producers Development Corp. general manager, Ed Schultz. "Winter treatment may reduce odour and be effective in separating water from the natural fertilizers in manure."Research funding from the Alberta Pork Producers Development Corp. enables Snowfluent™ testing on liquid hog manure at George and Tony Matejka's hog farm near Sylvan Lake. Once there are answers on what Snowfluent™ does to liquid hog manure, the questions on how to modify land application process to optimize the use of nutrients and water can be tackled.

Research will primarily focus on analysing snow, shallow ground water and runoff to determine how effective Snowfluent™ is in removing nitrogen and phosphorus from food processing wastewater and liquid hog manure. The processing based program of the Canada-Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agricultural (CAESA) Agreement is funding the pilot tests on Westcan Malting's wastewater at the Alberta Research Council in Vegreville.

"This is an example of the type of research that the Albert Research Council-Vegreville is very capable of doing with Alberta and Canadian industry," said Richard Coleman Ph.D, P.Ag., head of microbiology, Alberta Research Council-Vegreville. Coleman is leading the monitoring and analytical team.

Results of the pilot tests will be available in July.

Contact:	*Sandra Cooke* *(403)427-3397*	*Paul Lefebvre* *Delta Engineering* *(613) 521-0348*

Seed testing

All grain intended to be seeded in 1997 should be germination tested. Low germination may be caused by frost, sprouting in the fall, damage in the grain dryer or dormancy.

"In addition to germination tests, vigor tests should be conducted," said Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development crop specialist, Gary Berger. "In years where adverse weather affected growth and harvest, as we experienced last year, vigor tests can determine seed quality and performance more accurately than by using a germination test alone."

Cont'd on page 3

Reports from seed cleaning plants in the province, show that several lots of grain have been strongly dormant. Some had low germination levels but after the same grain was placed in deep freeze for a week and re-tested, the germination levels were significantly higher.

"A quick, at-home germination test should be done to get some indication of germination rate," said Berger. "Producers can take a grain sample, air dry it beside a household register at room temperature for one week and then place it in a freezer for another week to help break dormancy. Then complete the germination test."

New technology is enabling producers to go beyond germination tests to predict field performance. Vigor tests assess whether sample of seed will develop into normal, healthy plants under poor growing conditions.

"Vigor tests simulate climatic conditions as closely as possible, cool temperatures, wet conditions, micro organisms, seed soaking and accelerated aging that interfere with normal development," said Berger. "These tests indicate seedling defects and gage

the ability to survive poor growing conditions. Weak seedlings don't have the vigor and stamina to stand disease infections or other adverse conditions."

Most laboratories doing germination tests can also perform vigor tests. When sending a seed sample in, ask if vigor testing is available and what is charged to do the test.

Contact: Gary Berger
(403)675-2252

Range calving shelter pens

Strong winds, cold temperatures and calves all seem to happen at the same time. A calf shelter can be beneficial to provide some protection during late winter and early spring.

"At this time every year, producers start looking for plans for calf shelters," said Trevor Yurchak, beef specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "One of the shelter plans available is relatively simple and when built, placed and maintained well, gives very effective protection."

Shelters should be located on a well-drained knoll with the open front facing south. A southern exposure lets in the beneficial spring sunshine. A 12 x 16 ft. shelter is suitable for up to 20 calves. This size can be reduced to a 10-calf shelter that measures 8' x 12'. A shelter of this size can be skidded onto a flat-bed trailer to truck platform for transportation to remote sites.

"The height of the shelter roof should be sloped to the back," said Yurchak. "The average shelter measures eight feet at the front and about 6 feet in back. The height can be reduced, if the producer doesn't mind stooping."

Build the shelter with 3/8 inch plywood for walls and flooring. All together, 18 sheets of 4 x 8' sheathing is needed. Frame the shed slightly less than 16 feet long so that the roof sheathing can overhang the end walls with little splicing. Part of the sheets left over from the back wall and roof panels can be cut into 14 triangular gusset pieces.

Nail all sheathing and gussets to the frame securely with 1 1/2 inch, large head, galvanized roofing nails. The shelter needs to be strong enough to withstand rocking while being moved. Bolt steel angles, for strength, under each corner where the skids meet the sill and nail steel strapping at the centre of each end-wall sill in case an animal steps on the sill.

"If the site is exposed to strong winds, a weighted canvas or burlap curtain can be added and the shed should be anchored on all four corners by wiring it to stakes driven into the ground," he added. "Bed the floor liberally with straw, wood chips or other dry bedding material."

When the manure pack needs cleaning out, pry the skids carefully out of the manure pack and tow it off the bedded area to a new site. After the shed has been removed, clean and spread the manure.

Plans for this shelter are available from your local Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development office.

Contact: Trevor Yurchak
(403)675-2252

Greenhouse certification program

On January 8, 1997, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) announced an agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to establish a greenhouse certification program.

"This agreement between Canada and the U.S. is a major step forward in making import and export of greenhouse grown plant material across the border easier and less expensive for growers," said Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development greenhouse crop specialist, Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza. "Low-risk, greenhouse grown plants will now move more freely between the two countries."

To participate, growers enter into an agreement with their plant regulatory agency to adopt specific safeguards ensuring greenhouse plants are grown, stored, packaged, and shipped free of pests and diseases.

Approved facilities can ship greenhouse-grown plants with a special label that bares an assigned registration number. The labels will meet both countries' import plant health requirements and can be used in lieu of a phytosanitary

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certificate. These labels, affixed to shipping invoices, will improve the efficiency and speed of business and allow for easy tracking and record keeping.

"The certification program benefits Alberta growers importing plants from the U.S.," said Mirza. "With shipping pre-authorized, plant material will no longer need individual phytosanitary certificates. The labels are also less expensive, under 50 cents compared to $5 for phytosanitary certificates."

To date, the majority of Ontario export producers have been approved for the program. In B.C., certification of a few greenhouses and some broker facilities has been completed. Alberta facilities that regularly export material to the U.S. are encouraged to apply.

"Greenhouse crop producers receiving plant material from the U.S. can substantially reduce import inspection costs by applying for designation as a facility receiving U.S. Certified plant material," added Mirza.

Plant health officials from AAFC and USDA will routinely inspect participating facilities and plants. Individual shipments will no longer need to be inspected provided that compliance with the standards and safeguards of the agreement is maintained.

The plant regulatory agency in Alberta is the Plant Protection Branch of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. For further information on the program, brokers or producers should contact Hiro Koga of the plant protection branch at (403)292-4993.

Contact: Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza
(403)422-1789

FBMI call for proposals

The Canada-Alberta Farm Business Management Initiative (FBMI) is putting out a call for proposals in early February. It's an opportunity for individuals and agencies interested in farm business management to access funds for a variety of projects. Eligible activities include: management clubs; research and development projects; workshops and conferences; and, information and training sessions that use technology such as the Internet, video-conferencing and CD ROM.

"This is the first time FBMI has had a call for proposals at this time of year," said FBMI provincial coordinator, Anita Lunden. "We plan to have all applications processed by mid-March so approved projects can start in April and run through the summer and fall."

The application form is short and easy to complete. The initial proposal is only two pages long. If it's accepted, a full proposal is required, similar to other years.

"Offering a call for proposals at this time of year makes it easier for farm groups to apply." said Lunden. "We encourage small groups of farm managers to apply as a club. FBMI can help cover the cost of speakers and other types of learning activities groups may want to organize. When the proposals are submitted, they can pick the speakers, times and locations that suit them the best."

Applying in spring also works well for individuals and agencies that want to do research and development work to prepare for an activity being offered in the fall and winter. Preparation work could include surveys to see what is needed, doing research or starting to promote an activity planned for early fall.

"We'd like to see some of our programming partners from this year do follow up to their winter activities, " said Lunden. "We are looking at providing some one to one consulting, setting up a help line, establishing a Website with updated material and advice, or scheduling some teleconferences so past participants can share their experiences while trying to apply what they have learned."

While FBMI will fund up to 80 per cent of some projects, they are moving toward becoming a partner in most activities rather than a major source of funds. All projects require some contribution either from participants and/or industry sponsors. FBMI will be having another 'call' in September for winter projects.

For more information contact Arla Trueblood (403)954-3745 in Jarvie, Nan Bartlett (403)835-4288 in Fairview, or Craig Smith (403)626-3448 in Glenwood.

Contact: Anita Lunden
(403)556-4240

Agri-News Briefs

Barley growers convention

The 20th annual convention of the Western Barley Growers Association is being held at the Banff Park Lodge on February 12 – 14, 1997. The theme of the conference is *The Next 20 Years*. Export markets, biotechnology and issues facing barley growers in western Canada are on the agenda for discussion. Registration before February 6 is: members –$160/single and $210/couple plus GST; non-members – $180/single and $230/couple plus GST. Late registration, taken at the convention, is: members – $190/single and $240/couple plus GST; non-members – $200/single and $250/couple plus GST. For more information or to register, contact Kathy at (403)291-3630, fax (403)291-9841.

Soil science workshop

The 34th Annual Soil Science Workshop is scheduled for February 18 – 20, 1997 at the Coast Plaza Hotel, Calgary. The theme, Soil science: Its role in reclamation and its practical application in assessing capability, will focus discussions on issues related to soil capability. Soil inventory, conservation and fertility issues related to today's agricultural and industrial land use will also be discussed. Registration before February 10, 1997 is $100, day rates are also available. For more information, contact Allan Howard (403)381-5861, e-mail **howarda@agric.gov.ab.ca**.

Cow Profit$ Workshops

Over the next few months, Alberta cow-calf producers will be able to analyse their operation from the ground up. Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development is sponsoring a number of three-day workshops throughout the province where producers can have basic production and financial information for their cow-calf enterprise analysed. A computer program will take the information and provide comprehensive financial and production reports. Staff will be on hand to help interpret the reports and provide further analysis. Registration is $50 per farm. For further information or to register for the workshops, contact Dean Dyck, farm management specialist (403)340-7007, Red Deer.

Discussions on Bill C-72

The Alberta Grain Commission (AGC) is sponsoring open meetings throughout Alberta to examine the contents of Bill C-72 and how it will change the Canadian Wheat Board. The AGC has arranged to have a local lawyer in attendance at each meeting to explain the clauses of Bill C-72. This piece of legislation amends the Canadian Wheat Board Act and is important to all farmers. Meetings have been arranged for:

Fairview	Friday, Jan. 31	Fairview College Theatre
Grande Prairie	Monday, Feb. 3	Grande Prairie Inn
Red Deer	Tuesday, Feb. 4	Black Knight Inn
Taber	Tuesday, Feb. 4	Taber Community Centre
Vermilion	Wednesday, Feb. 5	Lakeland Mall Restaurant
Drumheller	Wednesday, Feb. 5	Drumheller Inn
Camrose	Thursday, Feb. 6	Norseman Inn
Westlock	Friday, Feb. 7	Westlock Inn

All meetings begin at 1:00 p.m. For further information, contact Ken Moholitny at (403)427-3078 or David Walker at (403)427-3077, Edmonton.

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AGRI-NEWS

February 10, 1997

Ropin' the Web and other cool stuff

Have you been on the Internet? Are you curious? Do you want to know what all the fuss is about? You've probably heard that there's a lot of bad stuff on the Internet, someone may have told you there's nothing of value, and there are people that say it's just a great big commercial.

"The kinds of information waiting to be found on the Internet are vast and the Internet, as a tool, can be very versatile," says Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development rural development specialist in Westlock, Kerry Engel. "I've found: a contact for the Western Canadian Garlic Growers Association; the phone number for a herb production specialist at the University of Saskatchewan; the address for the Fur Industry of Canada; a contact address for a great book on new food product development; market research studies done by Agri-Food Canada; equipment dealers; a Lynx farmer; information on doing business in a foreign country; courses being offered by the U of A; wild boar and ostrich production information; the Mushroom Growers Newsletter; Bed & Breakfast Guide; and, food trends."

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development has a terrific Web Site called 'Ropin the Web, **www.agric.gov.ab.ca**. It offers a search engine that allows you to enter "key words" about a subject you're interested in. The engine "searches" the site and comes up with a listing of related information. The site also offers an upcoming events page, daily updates, weekly/monthly updates, crops, livestock, food & Ag processing, and rural development information.

"All of the courses offered through regional advisory services are posted on the site," says Engel. "News columns, newsletters, news releases, research studies and some fact sheets are also posted for easy access. The Westlock home page is at: **agric.gov.ab.ca/offices/westlock/index**."

To provide more information on how the Internet can benefit the farm family, the "Farmer's Guide to the Information Highway" course is being offered in several locations in the province. Check the *Coming Events* listing at **http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/comeven.html**. This one-day program usually runs from 8:30 am - 4:30 pm. To register call 1-800-267-9997.

"Getting information is only one of the benefits of the Internet," adds Engel. "You could have a website of your own and use the Internet to get your information out. There are many agriculture sites on the Internet, some of which have been developed locally by Oral Unland of Agri Marketing Ltd. Unland

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is from Alcomdale and was instrumental in the development of the Wild Boar Group web page, **www.wildboar.com/council**. It's an example of the kind of information farmers can place on the Internet."

Isn't it time you checked it out?

Contact: *Kerry Engel*
(403)349-4465
www.engel.agric.ab.ca

Deadline approaching for Arable Acres Program

"The February 14, 1997, application deadline for the Arable Acres Supplementary Payment Program (AASPP) is fast approaching," says Walter Paszkowski, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "I encourage land owners to submit their applications as soon as possible."

Program applications were mailed to owners of Alberta farm land in December and early January. If you owned arable land in Alberta as of February 27, 1995, and did not receive an application, contact the Arable Acres administration office. All that is required on the application form is your social insurance or corporation/business number, a phone number and the signatures of all names on the land title. You do not have to list your acres on the application form as assessment information will be used to determine eligible acres.

The AASPP is funded by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and is a result of the bilateral agreement signed by the Alberta and federal governments. Fifty million dollars, less administration costs, will be distributed to owners of eligible cultivated acres in Alberta for which they did not receive a payment under the Western Grain Transition Payments Program.

A minimum of 10 eligible arable acres are required per application. A payment rate will be established for each of the assessment categories used for cultivated land. Payment is expected to be between $3.50 and $10 per acre, depending on the total number of eligible acres applied for under the program.

Applications must be received or postmarked by February 14, 1997, to be accepted under the program. Additional information or an application form may be obtained by phoning the Arable Acres administration office at 1-800-422-1353 (from Alberta locations) or 1-403-422-9167 (from outside the province).

Contact: *Brian Hlus/Ron Glen* *Lloyd Andruchow*
(403) 427-2137 *(403) 427-3338*

Anhydrous ammonia cold flow converters

The popularity of anhydrous ammonia (NH_3) as a nitrogen source on farmland continues to grow. Research into the safe use of NH_3 while seeding, along with the typically lower cost and higher concentration of nitrogen have helped its use grow across the prairies.

"The use of NH_3 is not without its controversies," says Robert Maze, project engineer with the Alberta Farm Machinery Research Centre (AFMRC) of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "One of the long running debates among farmers has been whether cold liquid or hot vapour flow of NH_3 is better in terms of soil retention."

NH_3 consists of 82 per cent nitrogen and 18 per cent hydrogen by weight. It occurs as a vapour and turns into a liquid at -3C (28° F). For use in agriculture, NH_3 is maintained in liquid form under pressure in a nurse tank. As it is released from the tank into the distribution system of the fertilizer applicator, the NH_3 expands and begins to warm converting it into a hot flow vapour.

"To turn the vapour form of NH_3 back into liquid before it is put into the soil, cold flow converters are used," adds Maze. "NH_3 expands in the converter and freezes, separating the liquid ammonia from the vapour and greatly dropping the pressure. Only about 85 per cent of the anhydrous ammonia turns liquid; the remainder stays in vapour form. The liquid flows by gravity through regular application equipment into the soil and the remaining vapour is normally injected into the ground using additional hose."

In 1996, AFMRC, Agrium, Bourgault Industries and Prairie Seeds completed a study at sites in Lethbridge and Edmonton to determine whether cold flow convertors offered any advantages over hot flow in terms of crop emergence and final yield.

"Crop emergence and yield were measured after direct seeding wheat, barley and canola using four seeding systems, and three nitrogen fertilizer rates," says Maze. "Nitrogen was applied as a cold flow liquid anhydrous ammonia, a hot flow vapour anhydrous ammonia and as granular urea. The trials showed the type and rate of nitrogen used in the study made no difference in plant counts and, in terms of final yield, cold flow convertors did not provide any benefit to wheat, barley and canola."

Contact: *Rob Maze*
(403)329-1212

Organic production and marketing

Organic foods are grains, vegetables, fruits grown without using chemical fertilizer, pesticides or herbicides. It also includes meat products from livestock reared without using hormones or chemicals other than standard vaccination.

"Products grown organically are becoming increasingly popular," says Raphaël Thierrin, Organic industry consultant. "Organic farming isn't something a producer can just decide to convert to overnight. A farm has to be certified organic before products from that farm can lay claim to the Organic title."

An *Organic Production and Marketing Conference* is being held at the Olds College on February 27-28, 1997 to help interested producers and farmers learn about the organic industry. The conference, organized by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, the extension services of Olds College and the Alberta Organic Industry, will provide an overview of the markets, regulations, international aspect of the industry and an industry trade show.

"Anyone interested in organic farming and production should consider attending," adds Thierrin." Presentations include becoming certified organic, processing organic products on-farm, and producing organic livestock, field crops, horticultural and grain crops. A tour of the Olds College composting technology centre is also offered."

The conference agenda ends with organic industry feedback sessions focusing on research priorities, marketing initiatives and the Canada Organic Program.

Organic lunches are included in the registration fee for participants and in the display fee for trade show exhibitors. Registration fee for the conference is $225 per person, $395 for couples and $75 for students. An organic banquet wraps up the first day's schedule. Banquet tickets are $20. For more information or to register, contact Thierrin at (403)686-3310 or e-mail raphael@nucleus.com

Contact: *Raphael Thierrin* *Mike Dolinski*
(403)686-3310 *(403)422-4873*

The Year of Asia Pacific

Does the Asian food market intrigue you? Are you interested in exporting to the world's largest consumer market? The Agriculture and Agri-Food Round Table, to kick off Canada's Year of Asia Pacific, is scheduled for February 24, 1997 at the Convention Centre in Edmonton.

"The event will be of special interest to Alberta food processors who are export ready and interested in the potential of the Asian market," says Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development trade director Asia Pacific, Jean Wilson. "Those attending the round table will have the opportunity to meet with buyers and trade commissioners on a one-on-one basis. Anyone not export ready, but who would like some feedback on a product, can display their product on table top displays and get feedback on the product suitability for the Asian market."

To learn more about the Asian market, the seminars are set-up to give background, information about trends, opportunities and constraints of the Asian market, and the trade commissioners and buyers will give an overview of their areas. Ron Davidson, trade commissioner in Japan, will address Successful Canadian Products in the Japanese Market. Catherine Morgan of JETRO will speak about Regulatory and Access Issues for the Japanese Market. Trade commissioners, Peter McArthur and Jim Booth, will present Opportunities and Constraints in the China/Hong Kong Market. Representatives from Taiwan and Korea and AESEAN countries are also participating. Over lunch, Alberta companies will discuss their experiences in the Asian market.

This event is sponsored by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Alberta Food Processors Association, Economic Development Edmonton, and Food and Beverage Canada. Registration fee is $25 per person. For more information and a registration form, phone Cheryl Lockhart of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada at (403)495-4144.

Contact: *Jean Wilson*
(403)427-4241

Choosing an alfalfa variety

With the number of varieties available to Alberta farmers, choosing an alfalfa variety can be a difficult task. It's often difficult to obtain comparative production and longevity information on the newer private varieties, particularly those that aren't included in the regional variety trials.

When making a selection, producers should consider:

- how long is the alfalfa to remain in the rotation;
- will the use of alfalfa be mainly pasture or hay or a combination of both: and
- can additional yield be sacrificed for longevity or vice versa.

"Although many varieties are not included in the annual Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development publication, *Varieties of Perennial Hay and Pasture Crops for Alberta*, some varieties not listed do very well under Alberta conditions," says Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development forage agronomist, Harvey Yoder. "Most alfalfa varieties fit into one of the four major types: standard, Flemish, creeping, and Siberian. Promotional material may clearly indicate what type of alfalfa it is, if not, ask the seed salesman."

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The standard type is the most commonly grown in Alberta. Varieties have a tap root and are generally considered winter hardy. Standard types of alfalfa may not be as productive as the Flemish types. Generally, standard types of alfalfa are used in rotations that will be in production for at least four years or longer. Standard varieties include: Algonquin, Beaver, Grimm, Peace and Crusader.

"Flemish varieties are not as winter hardy as the standard types but provide greater regrowth potential for second cuts," says Yoder. "Generally, these varieties have a very deep purple flower and are more productive than standard types, especially in the first two or three years of stand life. Flemish varieties are considered for shorter rotations, producing hay for the dehy industry or selling alfalfa as a cash crop." Common Flemish varieties include: Alouette, Anchor, Angus, Surpas and Impact.

The dry land, or creeping rooted varieties, were developed for the drier areas of the province and are used for pasture production. The creeping rooted types of alfalfa have a rhizomatous (creeping root) with the crown set deeper in the soil. These varieties usually withstand grazing better than the standard and Flemish types. They are very winter hardy but not as productive as other types under a two cut system. Creeping rooted varieties have variegated blossoms with colours ranging from white to purple. Under good moisture conditions, creeping rooted varieties may not creep as much as when in dry soil conditions. Creeping rooted types include: Spredor 2, Rambler, Rangelander, Drylander, and Heinrichs.

Siberian type alfalfas have yellow flowers and are extremely winter hardy. They are not as productive as other types, particularly in southern Alberta. Under northern Alberta conditions, Siberian types will produce as much for the first cut as other common varieties. However, there will be virtually no regrowth. At the present time, Anik is the only Siberian type alfalfa registered. Within a year or two, another Siberian type is expected to be registered that is more productive than Anik and will be used primarily for grazing.

"A few new varieties are sold as multi-leaf type alfalfas that may have a better stem to leaf ratio, resulting in higher quality alfalfa," says Yoder. "Most new varieties have been selected for greater disease and insect resistance. Under northern Alberta conditions there are no major disease or insect problems with alfalfa production when used as a hay or pasture crop."

At present, there is no bloat free alfalfa variety available. Work continues on a variety that will reduce bloat, particularly when grazed. When this variety will be made public is unknown.

For a copy of the factsheet *Varieties of Perennial Hay and Pasture Crops for Alberta*, contact your local Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district office or the Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. This publication provides production, disease, insect and longevity information for most of the common varieties of alfalfa. Local forage specialists with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development can also be contacted for additional information on alfalfa varieties.

Contact: Harvey Yoder
(403)623-5218

Swath-grazing on the increase

With the expected large increase in Alberta's beef herd, producing enough feed is important to consider. A recent tally of the supply and demand for Alberta's forage shows that current forage supplies are slightly less than demand. Alternative feeding methods need to be looked at.

"Swath grazing is one method that has potential as a low-cost feeding option," says Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development regional conservation coordinator, Ben Froebel. "Some Alberta farmers have been using swath grazing for over 20 years to help harvest feed and spread manure at the same time. It is as much an art as a science and each producer has developed a unique system to meet specific needs."

While there is a considerable amount of experience and information on swath grazing, it isn't available in a single source. To remedy this, a small group of producers, forage associations, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD) staff and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada staff have joined forces to produce a swath grazing publication for Alberta. It will address the many points to be reviewed when a farmer is considering swath grazing.

"The publication will be a reference guide on swath grazing and help identify research and extension needs," adds Froebel. "The project includes a farmer survey, interview style, to collect information on swath grazing systems."

Farmers using swath grazing, annual cereal crops or perennial forage stands, who are interested in sharing their experience can contact a forage association, AAFRD district office, forage or beef specialist or regional conservation coordinator. Survey participants are eligible for a March draw for one Pel and one Gallagher electric fencer.

Contact: Ben Froebel
(403)674-8305

Farm Credit Corporation scholarship

The Farm Credit Corporation (FCC) is providing 16 scholarships of $1000 to members of 4-H across Canada and members of Quebec Young Farmers and the Association de la jeunesse rurale du Quebec. The FCC awards program is designed to heighten youth awareness of agricultural issues, help rural youth gain access to post-secondary institutions and encourage pursuit of higher education.

Cont'd on page 5

"FCC members believe that family farms are the cornerstone of the agricultural economy and are pleased to support the next generation of Canadian farmers through these scholarships," says FCC executive vice-president of operations, Russ Holm. "4-H is recognized as one of Canada's premier rural agricultural organizations, helping youth develop life skills through participation in a range of projects. Quebec Young Farmers and the Association de la jeunesse rurale du Quebec play a similar role in Quebec."

To qualify for the 1997 education scholarships, applicants must be 16 years of age, submit a completed application form and write a 500 to 1000 word essay on one of the following topics:

- The Impact of Technology on Agriculture
- The Impact of Environmental Regulation on Agriculture
- The New Generation of Canadian Farmers: My Vision

"This year, a separate application form is required. The 1997 scholarship program will be administered by the Canadian 4-H Council and promoted by provincial 4-H Councils," says Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development provincial 4-H communications and marketing specialist, Carol Sullivan "Applicants can obtain application forms from the Canadian 4-H Council, FCC, Alberta Agriculture district offices and the provincial 4-H office in Edmonton. The deadline for submission of applications and essays is March 31, 1997."

Applicants must have been 4-H members for at least two years, registered as 4-H members within the last five years. Scholarship winners will be selected based on their essay submission, demonstrating a knowledge of Canadian agricultural issues.

The FCC is a federal Crown corporation providing term credit and financial services to Canadian farmers. The Corporation is headquartered in Regina, Saskatchewan and has 100 offices across Canada.

Contact: *Carol Sullivan*
(403)422-4H4H
sullivan@agric.gov.ab.ca

Agri-News Briefs

Outlets for livestock medicine

The Alberta Livestock Medicine Outlets Directory is now available. The directory is a reference that lists retail outlets licensed to stock and sell livestock medicines in the province and livestock medicine manufactures and distributors. Contact numbers and addresses for the Alberta Livestock Medicines Program Advisory Committee members are also included in this first issue of the directory. Any additions, deletions or corrections should be sent to Dr. Ray Fenton, DVM, administrator of the Alberta Livestock Medicines Program, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. Copies of the directory are available at district Agriculture offices, or by contacting the Publications Office, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton AB T6H 5T6. To order by phone, call toll-free 1-800-292-5697 or 427-0391 in Edmonton.

Special crops director

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's special crops product team (SCPT) has published a Special Crops Directory. It lists and identifies the active participants in the special crops industry – contractors, processors, researchers, exporters and government personnel. The directory is a useful reference in identifying various partners in the Alberta industry. It also enhances networking and communication among the various organizations. SCPT plans to update and print a new directory every two years. Copies of the directory are available by contacting Wayne Goruk at (403)427-3122. An Internet version of the directory is also available. Access this version at
http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/crops/special/directory/index
The Internet version is updated regularly.

Field pea meeting

On Thursday, February 20, 1997, a Leading Edge Field Pea meeting is planned for the Three Hills Community Centre. The meeting is organized by the Alberta Pulse Growers Commission. For further information, contact Don Boles, commissioner for zone 2, at (403)443-7259, or Mark Olson, crop specialist - pulse and special crops, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, (403)556-4255.

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International agriculture conference in Boston

All facets of the relationship between the quality and safety of food and the productions systems used to raise it are up for discussion at the International Conference on Agricultural Production and Nutrition. The conference, in Boston, Massachusetts, is planned for March 19 - 21, 1997. It will deal with biological and technological aspects, consumer attitudes, regulatory issues and agricultural development strategies. Speakers from 15 countries offer a total of 50 presentations, including: reports on new research, reviews of current knowledge and research needs, analysis of conceptual and methodological problems, and discussions of public policy implications. The conference is intended for researchers, farmers, consumer groups, the food processing and marketing industry, and agencies concerned with agricultural policy and public health. Registration is $135 (U.S.), which includes all program materials, proceedings volume, refreshments and reception. For further information, contact William Lockeretz, School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Tufts University, Medford, MA 02155 U.S., or e-mail: **Wlockeretz@infonet.tufts.edu**.

Ostrich on the Internet

The Alberta Ostrich Breeders Association (AOBA) recently launched their Internet site, giving them the means to become global. The AOBA web page is featured on the Global Ostrich Centre, located at **http://www.ostrichcentre.com**. In keeping with their goal to develop an on-line, global ostrich community, this website is primarily to exchange information, an important tool for this growing industry. Via the Internet, Alberta will reach out to the world, sharing information about the healthy benefits of ostrich meat, where consumers can enjoy ostrich in fine eating establishments and production and marketing tips for producers. Susan Duffield of RanchNet Ltd., ostrich breeder in Oyen, Alberta, designed the page for easy navigation. It includes a page banner, industry hub and public library section. The industry hub is a forum listing directories for producers, associations, veterinarians and businesses involved with the ostrich industry in Alberta. For further information, contact Kathy Lowther at (403)556-4220 in Olds, e-mail **lowther@agric.gov.ab.ca** or Sharon Fisk at (403)932-3832 in Cochrane, e-mail **fisks@cadvision.com**.

GRIP refund cheques out mid-February

Farmers will receive their Gross Revenue Insurance Plan (GRIP) premium refunds by

mid-February. Cheques from the Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC) are being mailed to all farmers who participated in the income support program since its inception in 1991. The program ended in 1995 due to a redesign of Alberta's agriculture safety nets to comply with international trade agreements. Each cheque will reflect the farmer's share of premiums contributed to the program. Approximately 30,000 cheques will be issued and participants will receive the refund before spring seeding. GRIP premiums were split among the federal government, the provincial government and the producer. For more information, contact Ron Glen or Brian Hlus (403)427-2137 or Brian Manning, president and managing director of AFSC (403) 782-8225.

Provincial Grain Marketing Conference

The Westlock Marketing Group, is sponsoring a two day conference on grain marketing, February 20 - 21, 1997 at the Westlock and District Community Hall, Westlock, Alberta. The agenda covers topics on: North American grain markets - changing times, U.S. market potential and farmer psychology; and, US demand for barley; the Alberta advantage; grain car ownership & ports; new agri-food products; agri-fibre products; bio-clean fuel - ethanol, Chinese market potential; and, Farmers For Justice. Blaine Phillips with CN will speak on transportation issues, Volkmar Stockman will make a presentation on board from straw, and Richard Lynch will discuss Canadian Agri-Foods. There will be ample opportunity to talk to the speakers during the two day event. A Trade Fair will be set up with industry partners such as the grain companies, brokers, banks and others. The conference is sponsored by the Westlock Marketing Group, Farm Business Management Initiative, and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. Registration is $100 per person or $150 per farm couple. Registration deadline is Feb. !4, 1997. For more information, contact Bill Chapman at (403)349-4465.

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AGRI-NEWS

February 17, 1997

Choose a variety to suit your needs

It's not too soon to be making plans for this year's crop. Information on field pea variety tests is plentiful. Sorting through all the information can make choosing a variety that suits all of your specific needs tough.

"The very first point to consider is the end results desired, how the peas will be marketed," says Terry Buss, pulse and special crops specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "If your crop is destined for the edible, human consumption market, decisions need to be made on whether to sell into the green or yellow markets. Yellow peas are a bit easier to grow for the yellow edible market as they don't bleach as readily in the field as green varieties. A good quality green, however, can demand a premium over yellows."

When targeting the feed market, yield is what should be looked for. In general, yellows out yield greens in all areas. Feed peas are a bit easier to produce as bleaching, splitting and cracking are not a problem on the feed market.

"Other factors to consider are standability, vine length and maturity," says Buss. "Some varieties that stand well don't yield as well as other varieties. Some varieties yield well but are very short which can be a problem, especially in a drought year. Yield in field pea varieties are affected by climate."

Field tests were conducted last year at Kitscoty and St. Vincent. These sites showed that some of the shorter season varieties are the highest yielding. The yellow pea trial showed a range of yields from 44 bc/ac (Grande) to 64 bc/ac (Mustang). The green pea trial resulted in a range of yields from 45 bc/ac (Totem) to 59.6 bc/ac (Ascona). The pea trial at St. Vincent resulted in yields ranging from 66 bc/ac (Majoret) to 71 bc/ac (Ascona). These results are from one year only and should not be the sole basis for deciding the variety to be grown.

"Many growers like peas in a rotation because early maturing varieties can be harvested before other crops," adds Buss. "They are harvested before the ducks and geese come in and can be a profitable part of a crop rotation program."

Be sure to contact the pulse and special crop specialist in your area for help in choosing the best variety for your needs and situation.

Contact *Terry Buss*
(403)853-8101

This Week

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

Regulations review

Six regulations related to the Marketing of Agricultural Products Act are scheduled for review in 1997. The Boards and Commissions conducting their reviews this year are: Alberta Cattle Commission, Alberta Egg Producers, Potato Growers of Alberta, Alberta Turkey Growers Marketing Board, Alberta Sugar Beet Growers' Marketing Board and Alberta Vegetable Grower's Marketing Board.

The Alberta Chicken Producers', Alberta Hatching Egg Producers, Alberta Sheep and Wool Commission, Alberta Fresh Vegetable Producers and Alberta Pork Producers Development Corporation completed their reviews in 1996. The refundable service charge commissions – barley, canola, pulse, soft wheat and winter wheat – are scheduled for review in 1998.

"The review is part of a government wide regulatory reform plan announced in April, 1995," says Brian Rhiness, general manager of Agricultural Production Marketing Council, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "A task force, mandated to review government regulations and keep only those necessary to ensure protection of the public interest, is overseeing the review. Gary Friedel, MLA Peace River, heads the task force."

Dates for industry review meetings will be advertised in commodity newsletters, farm publications and other news sources.

"Anyone in the agricultural community with an interest in or concern about the reviews, or those wishing to provide input to a review(s), should contact the Council's office for more information about the process," adds Rhiness.

The Council can be reached by phone (403)427-2164 or fax (403)422-9690. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator. The Council's address is #305, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6.

Contact: *Brian Rhiness* *(403)427-2164* · *Diane Aves* *(403)427-2164*

New video catalogue available

If you're in the market for agriculture videos, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's (AAFRD) Communications Division has just made things a whole lot easier for you.

"We're now selling 44 of our most popular titles directly out of the Publications Office," says Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development information officer Ken Blackley. "This means our customers will be able to buy videos from the same outlet where they get a lot of their published material."

This move brings the advantage of one-stop service. The Publications Office has a toll-free order number and can accept both Visa and MasterCard. As well, they'll have enough stock on hand to ensure immediate service.

"To coincide with the move, a new video sales catalogue has been released," adds Blackley. "The catalogue details the 44 titles being sold out of the Publication's Office. They're an excellent sampling of the more than 150 total videos for sale."

Catalogue titles have been conveniently arranged into eight categories. Each entry contains a description, length, years of production and price. There's also information on how to buy and/or borrow materials and an order form.

"Many of the prices have been reduced," says Blackley, "Tapes begin at $10 and the average is about $20. We've priced the tapes to make them affordable for farm families"

Copies of the new video catalogue are available at AAFRD district offices or from the Publications Office, main floor, 7000-113 street, Edmonton, AB, T6H 5T6. Video orders can also be placed by calling toll-free 1-800-292-5697 or 427-0391 in Edmonton.

Contact: *Ken Blackley*
(403) 422-3951

New resource materials

Training the Next Generation of Farm Managers is home study's latest release. These resource materials focus on teaching the farm business owner to train the next generation to become a farm manager and business owner.

"Farm owners and managers who met with our specialists in farm business management stressed that succession planning was one of the most complicated decisions that had to be made on their farms," says Faye Douglas Phillips, home study coordinator with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The most common comments are that: management transfer is very important, management transfer is even more important than asset and labour transfer because it is harder to see, identify and handle, and the issue of management transfer needs to be addressed, it can't be assumed it's just going to happen."

These resources help the farm business owners identify the management skills and abilities that need to be passed on to ensure continued business success. They also help develop leadership in the area of transferring management of the farm business and give ideas on how to make the transition happen as smoothly as possible. The next generation can be involved in the discussion of issues and in developing a training plan together.

If you fit into one of the following descriptions, these materials are designed for you:

- you are already training the next generation to take over the farm business,
- you expect to start training the next generation in a few years, and/or
- you are training the next generation to be a manager of his or her own farm business.

"The resource materials consist of five modules with a comprehensive resource section," says Douglas Phillips. "Some of the topics covered include: management roles, communication, negotiation, succession issues, conflict management, strategic planning, choosing a successor, career description, training plan, learning styles and evaluating progress."

Training the Next Generation was developed jointly with Lynne Stegman, rural development specialist, FBMI and a team of specialists in farm business management. Like other home study resources, these materials are designed so that people can work through it at their own pace, in their own home.

As part of home study's 20th anniversary celebration, this resource is available at a special introductory offer price of $25 plus GST until March 31, 1997. After that, the price will be $30 plus GST. Orders from outside Alberta require an additional handling fee.

To order, write the home study program, #201, 7000-113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6 and make cheques payable to the Provincial Treasurer; or order using your Visa or MasterCard by calling either (403)427-2171 or leaving a message on the order phone (403)427-2404 (24 hour service).

Application forms for this and other home study courses are available from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district offices or by calling the home study program at (403)427-2171. Government numbers are toll free by dialling 310-0000.

Contact: *Faye Douglas Phillips*
(403)427-2171

Well chlorination and submersible pump motors

Shock chlorination is a common and effective practice on the Prairies to control iron bacteria and kill other bacteria that may be present in a well. The procedure is used for both new and existing wells.

"The best way to shock a well is to chlorinate it with the submersible pump removed, but that isn't always practical and usually not even possible," says Ken Williamson, Ag engineering technologist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "When chlorine is introduced into well water, hypochlorous acid (HClO) and hypochlorite ions (ClO-) are formed. These two agents are usually very effective in controlling bacteria, but can be very corrosive to submersible pump motors, pumps, metal piping and casing if left in contact with the solutions for a long period of time."

Shock chlorination is an effective and safe treatment for controlling bacteria problems in water wells. There are a few simple guidelines that must be followed to prevent corrosion of submersible pumps and metal well casing. Chlorine is normally mixed with water for shock chlorination. The target concentration is 1000 ppm (or 0.1%) chlorine. At this strength, the safe contact time is in the range of three days to a week. The stronger the chlorine solution, the more potential for corrosion.

The following list of chlorine solutions normally used in wells and the suggested maximum exposure time for each were taken from the fall 1996 issue of *Prairie Water News*:

Sodium Hypochlorite (Na ClO) – is sold as a water and chlorine solution. It is used for household bleaches and is available in two strengths, 'domestic' and 'commercial'.

Domestic – is the common household bleach (Javex). For domestic strength bleach (5.25% solution of chlorine), exposure time for submersible motors should be limited to two to three days.

Cont'd on page 4

Commercial – consists of 10 to 19 per cent chlorine solutions. Concentrations of 15 per cent are common in commercial strength bleach. This means smaller amounts can be used, and exposure time for submersible motors should be limited to one to two days.

Calcium Hypochlorite ($Ca(C10)_2$) – is normally sold in powder or tablet form. H.T.H. is a common name for this product, which consists of 30 to 75 per cent active chlorine by weight. Common mixtures are 65 per cent. If this type of chlorine is merely dumped into a well, it will probably come into contact with a submersible motor before it has dissolved. This would most likely result in corrosion damage. Powder or tablet forms of chlorine should always be dissolved at approximately one part product to 10 parts water before being added to a well with a submersible pump. Exposure time should be limited to one or two days.

"The time of exposure is more important than the type or amount of chlorine mixture used," added Williamson. "Chlorine solutions should never be left in contact with submersible motors longer than needed and definitely not for more than one or two days."

Extended contact with chlorine solutions could start corrosion of stainless steel outer materials, especially in welded seams. Once corrosion begins, it continues even after the chlorine has been pumped off and can be the cause of early motor failure.

Contact: *Ken Williamson*
(403)340-5324

Acquired seed for 1997, yet?

Buy, book, or arrange seed for your 1997 crop early. Poor harvest conditions in many parts of Alberta resulted in decreased supplies of good seed. The greatest impact will be on the supply of newer varieties which have had less years for seed multiplication.

"Pedigreed seed of top varieties will likely be the first sold," says Trevor Schoff, cereal and oilseed specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Source these varieties early and be prepared to pick an alternative in case your first choice is already gone."

Weathered, light, undersized, shrunken, immature or sprouted seed are all symptoms of poor seed to watch for this year. Inspect colour, shape and size of kernels to help determine if the hot dry period in late summer or the wet harvest reduced seed viability. Research at the University of Manitoba found weathered wheat and barley seed resulted in up to a 10% lower yield than non-weathered seed.

"If your farm is in an area with low local pedigreed seed availability seed may be brought in from other areas or common seed may be substituted for pedigreed seed," says Schoff. "If you decide to use common seed, beware of the high tolerance of weed seeds. Pedigreed seed has lower weed seed tolerances."

If you choose common seed, consider the management practices used to grow the crop. Was adequate water and nutrition available to produce good seed? Was the crop sprayed with Roundup as a preharvest treatment? If so, it is not recommended for seed.

"Seed brought from outside areas may contain weed seeds not present on your farm" adds Schoff. "Ask to see a certificate of analysis for the seed."

A germination test should be performed on any grain considered for seed. In addition, a vigour test is a real asset to help determine if seed quality was reduced by environmental conditions in 1996. Vigour should be within 10% of the germination rating. A home germination test can be performed but an accredited seed lab is more qualified to assess seed quality. They are skilled at handling samples in a way that minimizes the effects of temporary seed dormancy. They count only seeds that are capable of developing into a healthy plant, not all those that sprout.

"Always ask for a certificate of analysis when buying pedigreed seed," says Schoff. "This will state weed type present and germination rate and date."

It is essential to use quality seed in order to get your crop off to a good start. Seed purchased from a reputable supplier who is distributing locally grown seed will lessen the chance of introducing new weeds or diseases to your farm.

Contact: *Trevor Schoff*
(403)679-1210

January was cold

The new year, 1997, began in keeping with the cold tradition carried over from the last few months of 1996. January weather was cold with precipitation totals below normal.

"January started with below normal temperatures in the north and above normal temperatures in the south," says Peter Dzikowski, agri-weather resource specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Temperatures during the second week of the month were below normal with overnight temperatures on January 9 and 10, about -40° C. Warm air returned to Alberta for a few days around the middle of January. During the fourth week, -30° to -40° C temperatures returned. The month ended with two to three days of above normal temperatures."

The provincial average temperature was 3.5 degrees below the 1961 to 1990 average of -13.1 degrees C. Most Alberta locations reported monthly average temperatures one to five degrees below normal.

The greatest temperature departures of about five degrees below normal were reported in south central Alberta between Rocky Mountain House and Coronation.

Whitecourt reported the smallest temperature departure, 0.8 degrees cooler than the monthly normal temperature of -14.0 degrees.

"Precipitation levels were relatively low during January," says Dzikowski. "Winter, in Alberta, is the driest time of the year."

The provincial average precipitation of 17.8 mm was below normal, 5.5 mm below the 1961 to 1990 average of 23.3. These averages are based on data recorded at 22 Environment Canada climate stations across Alberta.

In the Peace region of Alberta, near normal precipitation amounts of 20 to 40 mm, or 83 to 124 per cent of normal, were reported. All other regions reported about two thirds of January normal precipitation. Amounts of 6.4 to 38.2 mm, or 21 to 134 per cent of normal were reported. Calgary was an exception, reporting 18.5 mm of precipitation, 152 per cent of the normal January precipitation of 12.1 mm.

Contact: Peter Dzikowski
(403)427-3594

Alfalfa in your rotation

At a recent Alfalfa Seed Producers Conference the benefits of alfalfa, as the best crop to put into a rotation, were highlighted Even 11 years after an alfalfa stand is removed, the beneficial effects can still be measured. At the conference, Dr. Martin Entz, crop science professor at the University of Manitoba, stated that just two years of alfalfa will maximize benefits for a least one crop following the alfalfa. Even if peas follow alfalfa, followed by wheat, the wheat will yield more compared to wheat following peas with no alfalfa in previous years.

"Alfalfa releases nitrogen, but the major benefit is more related to organic matter and soil structure," says Gordon Frank, crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Alfalfa creates soil pores that allow better water infiltration. Crops that follow alfalfa will root deeper than those following other crops."

The beneficial effects of alfalfa are decreased if excess tillage is used to remove the alfalfa. Tillage destroys the soil pores developed by the alfalfa roots. Greater tillage releases more nitrogen early. This reduces the long term slow release benefits of the nitrogen. Terminating alfalfa stands with herbicides and direct seeding the next crop with little or no tillage is one way to maximize the benefits.

"Dr. Entz favours a relatively short duration for alfalfa stands," adds Frank. "His studies in western Canada show greater yield benefits from rotations that include many crops, especially alfalfa. A good rotation rule of thumb is three years of alfalfa, two years of cereals, one year of peas, another year of cereals and then back to alfalfa."

Grass forages also work well to improve soil structure. They require more fertilizer during productive years, but release nutrients for a long period of time after being removed.

"Crop rotations spread risk, improve soil organic matter, improve soil structure, reduce erosion, improve nutrient cycling and control diseases, insects and weeds," says Frank. "Some rotations can be very compatible with direct seeding. A benefit of the two working together is the dramatic increase in ground beetles that eat weed seeds and diseased plant tissue on the soil surface. Include alfalfa, the best forage in rotation, for maximum benefit."

Contact: Gordon Frank
(403)362-1212

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Direct seeding for irrigation

The conception that direct seeding doesn't work on irrigation is about to be dispelled. A seminar on direct seeding technology and how it can work on irrigated lands is scheduled for Tuesday, February 25, 1997, at the Heritage Inn, Brooks, Alberta. Speakers will talk about agronomy, seed drill openers, weeds and on farm experience. Some local producers have been trying direct seeding with surprisingly good results which has prompted research stations, machinery manufacturers and fertilizer companies to reevaluate the advantages of producing products better suited to irrigated and smaller farms. Registration for the seminar is $10 and includes lunch. To register or for further information, contact Gordon Frank (403)362-1212 in Brooks.

Annual general ginseng meeting

The Alberta Ginseng Association is holding their annual general meeting and trade show at the Margaret Parson's Theatre in the Red Deer College on March 14 to 15, 1997. Several distinguished guest speakers will be featured during the sessions on March 15 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The trade show, always a special feature of the event, will occupy the wide assembly area in front of the Theatre. Registration fee is $50 per person and $75 per couple. For more information on the annual general meeting or the Alberta Ginseng Association, contact the Association at 105, 150 Crowfoot Cres. N.W., Suite 706, Calgary, AB T3G 3T2 or fax (403)547-4288.

Fertilizer program

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development has released the long awaited fertilizer recommendation program. This new program is still experimental. Farmers can get the basic program and all the updates free from the Internet. It is easy to access from the Alberta Agriculture homepage, at **http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca**. Simply go to the ***General Science*** section and then click on ***Soil***. For further information or if you have questions on the program, contact Len Kryzanowski, crop nutrition agronomist, (403)427-6361 in Edmonton.

Pruning, it's easier than you think

Basic pruning courses are being offered during March. In Edmonton, course dates are March 4 and 5 and March 6 and 7; in Grande Prairie, course date is March 13 and 14, 1997. These two-day courses are suited to beginning arborists, landscape maintenance contractors, municipal employees and anyone interested in tree pruning. Subjects include plant structures, insect and diseases of trees and shrubs, plant hardiness, pruning of trees, including fruit and shrubs. The course provides hands-on techniques using pruning tools to help hone individual pruning skills. An outdoor practical and written exam are given and certificates issued following successful completion of the course. Seating is limited and advance registration is required. For information on the course and registration fee, contact Dianne, Landscape Alberta Nursery Trades Association, at (403)489-1991, fax (403)444-2151, e-mail **lanta@planet.eon.net**.

Courses at the Garden

The Devonian Botanic Garden is offering a variety of courses during March, 1997. Native plants nursery, landscape property maintenance, dried flowers (growing, harvesting and crafts), medicinal plants for pleasure and profit, woodlot management, and pond raising of rainbow trout are just some of the courses being offered. The Garden is located five kilometres north of the Town of Devon on Hwy 60 (25 km southwest of Edmonton). Many other courses are held at the Garden in horticulture, nature study and nature crafts during their spring/summer program which runs until August, 1997. Contact the Garden at (403)987-2064 for more information, a free course brochure or to register for one of the many courses.

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Free & Easy Edu-fair

It's Free and It's Easy for urban teachers to participate in an amazing professional development program called ***Free & Easy Edu-fair*** on Campus, March 13, 1997 at the University of Alberta.

United Farmers of Alberta Co-op (UFA) is leading the agriculture industry in sponsoring a full day of interactive information sessions and exhibits specially designed for Alberta teachers. The 83 registered participants will start the day by choosing mini sessions ranging from *Dilemmas and Decisions that Face Farmers Regarding Pest Management*; *How We Overcame the Dust Bowl of the '30's*; to, *Can Plants Get Fat - Feeding the Plants that Feed the World*.

"The afternoon will be spent touring the more than 35 exhibits of agriculture topics for classroom integration hosted by people from agriculture industry and government who have developed educational programs and resources for classroom applications," says Betty Gabert, Agriculture in the Classroom coordinator with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Evening hands-on workshops will round out the busy day for teachers. They'll learn how to manage agriculture issues in their classrooms. They will be able to work with practising scientists on a choice of nine labs with engaging titles such as the *Hot, Steamy and Degrading - Composting*, or they can participate in a discussion on world trade dynamics."

The objective of this event is to put a face on the industry that produces, processes, and markets local and global food products. This essential sector employs one-third of Albertans today and is projected to be one of our key growth industries in the next twenty years.

"For the past 12 years, the agriculture industry has been a partner in professional development for Alberta teachers through sponsorship and participation in the Agriculture in the Classroom Program," adds Gabert. "The March 13th Edu-Fair on Campus is the first component of the *Free & Easy Series*. It will be followed by the Food and You Agriculture Industry Tour and Farm Stay May 30 - 31, 1997. Industry sponsorship in this program is making it 'free and easy' for teachers to attend by covering all meals and the costs of substitute teachers."

The Free & Easy Series is a Co-venture program with Agriculture in the Classroom, United Farmers of Alberta Co-op Ltd. (our major sponsor), University of Alberta – Continuing Professional Education, Faculties of Education and Agriculture, Forestry and Home Economics. Contributing Sponsors to date include: Monsanto Canada Inc., DowElanco Canada Inc., United Grain Growers, Alberta Irrigation Products Association, Alberta Agriculture Research Institute, Alberta Canola Commission, Alberta Turkey Growers Marketing Board, Alberta Egg Producers Board, Alberta Chicken Producers.

Contact: *Betty Gabert*
(403) 427-4225

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Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

Plan now for winter forage

Now is a good time to start thinking about what livestock will eat next winter. Long Alberta winters necessitate that producers plan the most cost effective way to feed cows.

"Two things that determine ideal winter feeds are the cows you have and the resources available to either produce or buy feeds," says Lorne Erickson, forage specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The most cost effective choice of feeds differs for every farm and ranch and may vary from year to year."

Cost effective feed means the lowest cost ration that allows animals to meet their production potential. As long as enough good quality feed is left under the snow, an 1100 pound cow calving in May can be expected to graze most of the winter with only supplemental feed provided. This is a very low cost feed program, but the output is also low when compared to a 1600 pound cow calving in January.

"The larger, earlier calving cow has a much greater production potential and requires a greater quantity and a higher quality feed to reach that potential," says Erickson.

In order of quality and cost, from lowest to highest, common feed choices are: chaff, straw, hay, silage and grain. Winter grazing of grasses, legumes or cereal swaths falls somewhere between straw and silage depending on the crop and its maturity at time of cutting or killing frost. The total cost of a winter feed program is the sum of the value of the feed in the field, harvesting and transportation, harvest and feeding losses, feeding equipment and labour costs, and manure removal.

Lower output (L.O.) cows can do well on the lower end feeds, chaff, straw, winter grazing and hay while higher output (H.O.) cows rely on high end feeds, swath grazing, hay, silage and/or grain. The challenge is to design a feed program for H.O. cows that is as cost effective as for L.O. cows.

"Too many high end feeds for L.O. cows are not cost effective because they cannot produce enough to warrant the cost," adds Erickson. "L.O. cows can be wintered mostly on low cost feeds with higher valued feeds used as supplements to meet nutrient requirements. H.O. cows require higher cost feeds, adding low cost feeds when conditions allow it, to reduce costs. In both cases, maximizing the length of the grazing season with stockpiled grass or swath grazing is important in making wise choices for controlling costs in feeds."

Access to large areas of less productive land favours winter grazing, and lets the producer use lower valued feeds supplemented with grains. This situation is ideal for L.O. cows. Silage or swath grazing would be good supplement choices if limited acres of better land are available close to the feeding area.

Where highly productive land is available for feed production, silage is a good choice because of the large tonnage of high quality nutrients that can be harvested per acre. Swath grazing could also be effective in some circumstances. Good land probably means that chaff and straw are also available nearby, a situation well suited for H.O. cows.

"Drawing up a winter feed plan is one way to minimize costs on the farm or ranch," adds Erickson. "If extra help is needed at the planning stage, be sure to contact one of the provincial forage specialists or your local Agriculture office.

Contact: *Lorne Erickson*
(403)843-2201
1-800-785-6546

Opportunities in Agri-food processing

Entrepreneurs in Alberta are adding value to primary agriculture commodities. Processed forage, canola oil, beef cuts, dairy products, sauces and condiments, bakery items, meat glue, straw board, buffalo jerky, honey cured Saskatoon raisins, shelf-stable ready to eat soup and fresh noodles are just a few examples of the products Alberta is turning out 'market ready'.

"Adding value to a product means it is processed before being sold," says Marian Williams, rural development specialist – business with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Value-added products command higher prices than primary commodities. They also keep and create jobs in Alberta. Last year, over $5.5 billion worth of processed food made the food and beverage processing industry the largest manufacturing industry in the province."

There are many opportunities to add value to the agri-food sector. Knowing the product, market, competition and the customer helps Alberta processors make the most of their opportunities.

"Ideas and opportunities in the food and beverage industry are too numerous to list," says Karen Goad, agri-food development consultant with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Alberta has some of the brightest ideas and the most ideal conditions for turning those ideas into successful business ventures."

Some of the opportunities being considered in Alberta are:

Horticulture –

- fresh herbs and spices year round for the food service trade;
- contract marketing of greenhouse production;
- functional foods, foods with pharmaceutical or nutraceutical benefits;
- essential oils for flavourings, cosmetics or aromatherapy markets;

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- wild or natural fruit products for the retail and wholesale bakery or gift markets;
- fresh, precut, cleaned, packaged fruits and vegetables for the retail or restaurant markets;
- freeze dried fruit or vegetable juice crystals for the export market.

Agri-Service –

- specialty pet food products and wild bird food rations;
- fish farming for human consumption;
- pond fish management for backyard and municipal pond stock;
- alternative fibres for the construction, clothing and export food industries.

Grains –

- shelf-stable, quick cooking pea, bean and lentil products;
- bean flour products for the baking and fast food industries;
- organic grain products for the baking and retail sectors.

Livestock –

- exotic varieties and specialty cuts for the high end consumer and restaurant market;
- 'natural' products;
- Kosher food products.

Other Foods –

- light, healthy, ethnic based fresh foods;
- ethnic flavours;
- low fat, higher fibre and tasty convenience dishes for the busy or aging consumer;
- specialty vegetable oils for the baking industry;
- fractionation for use in the pharmaceutical, nutraceutical or cosmetic markets.

For more information on Alberta's growing agri-food processing industry, contact one of the provincial rural development specialists or agri-food development consultants.

Contact: Marian Williams
(403)679-1210

Karen Goad
(403)538-5629

Soil fertility

Every time a crop is taken off, nutrients are removed. Soil fertility is a complex science and opinions are numerous on how much, what proportions and what form of fertilizer should be used

"Soil has a tremendous buffering capacity," says Ron Hockridge, crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Eventually, however, some of the nutrients removed with the crop must be replaced. An economic approach to fertilizer estimates crop response to nitrogen using current fertilizer and commodity process to calculate the level at which the last dollar spent on fertilizer will generate a dollar return from the crop."

Weather plays a key role in crop response, so the level of fertility is usually backed off to allow for risk. Other major nutrients are balanced according to expected crop yield. Minor nutrients are considered only if they are at levels that may lead to plant health problems.

"Approaching fertilizer use considerations in this way is cost effective," adds Hockridge. "Most of the nitrogen applied is only available in the year it is applied because water moves it out of the rooting zone quickly. It is important for the producer to take advantage of the nitrogen supply while it is there."

Including forages in the crop rotation complicates things. Forage crops remove many nutrients from the soil, some of them are hard to replace. Immobile elements, such as phosphorous, often don't show an economic response in the year of application. Their benefits may be less obvious, contributing to the health and longevity of the stand, and may not show an economic benefit to the forage crop for two or three years.

"The influence of forages carries over to annual crops, too," says Hockridge. "Most producers recognize improvements in soil tilth from roots being left behind. While there is a gradual release of plant nutrients as organic matter breaks down, there can be a down side

"Major phosphorous deficiencies can show up in annual crops following a forage crop that did not receive phosphate fertilizer for several years. This element must be supplied in greater amounts and in an available form after a forage crop. The alternative is to supply a certain amount of phosphate every year."

The economic response approach to fertility has merit. When planning a fertilizer program, be sure to consider the long term complexity of soils and cropping, also.

Contact: Ron Hockridge
(403)361-1240

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1997 Beef Congress

Sessions on minerals on pasture, dockage, low stress weaning, carcass damage that starts at birth, business decision making and the future of forage handling equipment are few of the features at the 1997 Beef Congress. The Congress takes place on March 19 and 20, 1997 at the Westerner Park, Red Deer. The event includes a cattleman's futurity, pen of three heifer show, single heifer futurity and bull exhibits. An industry trade show, Bull Pit session on the ideal calving season, and the annual awards banquet round out the agenda. For further information, call your local Agriculture office or the Red Deer Chamber of Commerce (403)347-4491.

The ginseng industry

As an overview of ginseng production, harvesting and marketing across the Prairies, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development has produced an Agriculture business profile ***Ag-Ventures*** factsheet on this growing industry. The factsheet includes industry highlights on the uses and types of ginseng, market and Canadian production estimates and regulatory information. The ginseng industry Ag-Ventures factsheet is Agdex #188/830-2. Copies are available from the Publications Office, main floor, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6.

Take a 'New Look'

Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC) is introducing its "new look" crop insurance for 1997. Premiums for farmers drop an average of 25 per cent and a new 50 per cent coverage level is now offered. Public meetings to detail the new program and update farmers on the Farm Income Disaster Program (FIDP) are being held in February and March. For further information contact your local Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development office. 'New Look' meetings are scheduled as follows:

Feb. 24	Vulcan – Legion Hall	10:00 a.m.
	Red Deer – Bower-Kin Community Centre	1:00 p.m.
	Vermilion – Legion	7:00 p.m.
Feb. 25	Strathmore – Community Hall	1:30 p.m.
	Medicine Hat – Cypress Centre	2:30 p.m.
	Atmore – Atmore Community Centre	7:30 p.m.
	Fort Vermilion – Community Cultural Complex	1:00 p.m.
Feb. 26	Warner – Elks Hall	1:00 p.m.
	Drumheller – Civic Centre	1:30 p.m.
	Wasketanau – Community Hall	7:00 p.m.
	Manning – Battle River Agricultural Hall	1:00 p.m.
Feb. 27	Brooks – Heritage Inn	1:30 p.m.
	Camrose – Camrose Regional Exhibition	1:00 p.m.
	Thorsby – Thorsby Community Hall	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 28	Ponoka – Anglican Church	2:00 p.m.
	Vegreville – Elks Hall	1:00 p.m.
March 3	Falher – Knights of Columbus Hall	2:00 p.m.
March 4	Three Hills – Old Courtroom	1:00 p.m.
	Cardston – Provincial Building	1:00 p.m.
	Wainwright – Provincial Building	1:00 p.m.
	Evansburg – Heritage House	1:30 p.m.
March 5	Olds – Olds Legion	1:00 p.m.
	Pincher Creek – M.D. Building	1:00 p.m.
	Provost – Legion	1:00 p.m.
	Boyle – Boyle Curling Rink	1:00 p.m.
March 6	Stony Plain – Provincial Building	1:30 p.m.
March 7	Stettler – Legion Senior Centre	1:00 p.m.
	Two Hills – Centennial Hall	1:00 p.m.
March 10	Fairview – Dunvegan Motor Inn	1:00 p.m.
	Taber – Heritage Inn	1:30 p.m.
March 11	Lacombe – Research Station - Conference Room	1:00 p.m.
	Bonnyville – Provincial Building	1:00 p.m.
	Claresholm – Provincial Building	1:30 p.m.
	Vauxhall – Community Centre	1:30 p.m.
March 12	Barrhead – Provincial Building	1:30 p.m.
	High River – Highwood Memorial Centre	1:00 p.m.
March 13	Sedgewick – Legion	7:00 p.m.

Environmental impact of weeds

The Eastern Slopes Weed Management Group is holding a weed awareness meeting on February 27, 1997 at the Sundre Seniors Lodge. The meeting is intended to initiate a cooperative and coordinated approach in protecting native plant species from introduced and invasive weeds. These non-native, bio-pollutant weeds are, in some cases, reaching epidemic proportions in some areas of the Southern East Slopes region of the Rocky Mountains. The meeting is open to everyone with an interest in preserving the Southern East Slopes. The workshop is free, but enrollment is limited to 200. Attendants must pre-register. For more information or to register, contact Kim Nielsen, M.D. of Clearwater in Rocky Mountain House at (403)845-4444.

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Safety is a real benefit

Safety on farms and ranches is a never ending story. Knowing the causes of farm injuries and deaths, knowing the healthy and safe way of operating farm machinery and the precautions to take when handling livestock, are not enough.

"Every farmer in Alberta that I've spoken with can recite at least 10 reasons why farm accidents happen – the awareness is absolutely there," says Solomon Kyeremanteng, manager of the farm safety program with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Farmers have the knowledge. This makes us question why farm accidents are still happening, especially with the frequency experienced in Alberta last year."

There were 22 farm related fatalities in 1996. On average, two farm accidents were treated in Alberta hospitals each and every day. These numbers are a significant increase from the 12 fatalities reported in 1995 statistics.

"The number of injuries requiring medical attention, not to mention the injuries that resulted in death, are simply unacceptable," says Kyeremanteng."In no other industry would this accident occurrence rate be tolerated."

The wet, cold weather experienced last year may have had a direct affect on the number of farm accidents, but that shouldn't be an excuse. The old adage '*always be careful*' should be Alberta's farm motto. Life is too precious to be careless with it. Farmers worked extra long hours when weather permitted and continually worked against the clock to get crops planted and then again during harvest.

"Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development has been leading the campaign for farm safety for years," adds Kyeremanteng. "Farmers themselves must take ownership of this issue and take the initiative to work safely.

"The farm safety campaign this year focuses on the positive benefits of farm safety and on programs such as hearing conservation, an initiative of Women of Unifarm; the farm safety CD ROM made available to elementary school students by NOVA and TransAlta; UFA and CBC promote the '*It can happen to you*' awareness campaign; and, the Alberta Women's Institute is spear-heading the Canada Agriculture Safety Project here in Alberta."

A Safe Farm is a Great Place to Grow is the theme of Farm Safety Week, March 12 -19, 1997. This year, the goal is to considerably reduce the number of injuries and fatalities, and that's a goal that benefits all Albertans.

Contact: Solomon Kyeremanteng
(403)427-4227

This Week

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4-Hers snowmobile for safety

Across the province, 4-H members are safely experiencing winter on their snowmobiles. Alberta's 4-H program gives youth the opportunity to *Learn To Do By Doing* through their Club projects.

"In the 4-H snowmobile project, members aged 14 and over, learn safety, skill and an appreciation of nature," says Carol Sullivan, provincial 4-H communications and marketing specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The 4-Hers follow the Alberta Snowmobile Association Code of Ethics that stresses respect for nature, private property and activities of other winter outdoor enthusiasts."

Rick Stone is the snowmobile project leader with the Grizzly Bear Coulee 4-H Multi Club in Kitscoty. "The Club year began with members receiving certification in St. John Basic First Aid," says Stone. "They also learn about engine operation and simple maintenance of a snowmobile, trail hazards and outdoor survival techniques. Each project meeting also includes a daytime ride where members practice the skillful operation of a snowmobile. Now the members are busy planning a weekend trip to the Edson area."

The snowmobile project of the Grizzly Bear Coulee 4-H Multi Club is accident free. The members wear proper clothing and helmets. They ride on marked trails and go slowly until they know the area well.

"Along with the fun, comes responsibility," adds Stone.

For more information on the Alberta 4-H program and Clubs in your community, call (403) 422-4H4H.

Contact: *Carol Sullivan*
(403)427-4499

Income tax and the WGTPP

Most farmers have recently received their AGR-1 forms that indicate income received under program payments.

"Judging from the number of calls received, the forms indicating payments received under the Western Grains Transition Payment Program (WGTPP or the Crow payout) seem to be causing some confusion," says John Erdman, P.Ag., farm management specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The possibility exists that farmers who do their own tax returns, or have it done by a service, may incorrectly record this as taxable income. Most accountants are aware of the proper treatment, however, it is still prudent to verify that payments have received correct treatment."

If a landowner records the payments as taxable income, a significant portion may be taxed back or, for seniors, may result in a clawback of Old Age Security benefits, Guaranteed Income Supplements, reduce age credits or may reduce Alberta Health Care benefits.

"The payments are revenue, but the landowner should not be reporting them as taxable income," says Erdman. "For the landowner, these payments are applied against the capital cost base of the land which received the payment. If a tenant received a cheque under the program, as a result of the equitable agreement clause for example, then the tenant should indeed declare this as taxable income."

An accountant or Revenue Canada can provide further advice on the treatment of these payments. If contacting Revenue Canada (1-800-959-8281), ask to speak to a resource person about the WGTPP, as front-line workers are better equipped to handle regular tax inquiries.

Contact: *John Erdman*
(403)632-5400

Medicinal and aromatic plants

Growers interested in medicinal and aromatic plants have the opportunity to learn more on the topic at an upcoming conference. The second annual Prairie Medicinal and Aromatic Plants conference (PMAPC '97) is slated for March 9 - 11, 1997 in Brandon, Manitoba. PMAPC '97 will address production, marketing and processing.

"There is a growing interest in the cultivation of medicinal plants," says Dr. Stan Blade, new crops breeder with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The opportunities are out there but they aren't likely to be handed to the producer in one nice package. Prospective growers need to do their homework in the market and sleuth out those opportunities. That's why the organizing committee has placed a strong emphasis on marketing for the conference."

Several speakers will address the subject of marketing including Richard Alan Miller, author of *The Potential of Herbs as a Cash Crop*. He is recognized throughout North America for his experience and expertise in herb marketing. Another renowned speaker is Dr. James Simon from the Centre of New Crops and Plant Products at Purdue University in Indiana. He will discuss trends and opportunities for herb production.

Other speakers, including Blade, will discuss medicinal and aromatic plant production, processing and research being conducted across the prairies. Using the Internet to find information on marketing, processing and growing will also be covered.

"PMAPC '96 was held in Olds and drew more than 300 participants," says Blade. "The 1997 conference promises to be an informative and very timely event."

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Detailed information is available by calling Blade at the Crop Diversification Centre North (403)422-1789 or visiting **http://wwwdocker.com/~gordona/conf.htm** on the Internet.

Contact: *Dr Stan Blade*
(403)422-1789

New trends – new cereal products

Changing consumer tastes has prompted Canadian manufacturers to develop new products to compete with imports. Some successful new cereal product lines include snacking crackers, cookies with a variety of fruit fillings, individually portion-packed cookies and crackers for school lunches, fresh pasta, high-fibre breakfast cereals and oriental style noodles.

"Many new products originate in response to increased consumer awareness of nutrition," says Janice McGregor, rural development specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Other products, such as gourmet cookies and crackers are driven by consumer demand for new flavours, high quality and convenience."

Alberta shares in the strong international reputation for quality and value of Canadian cereal grains – wheat, barley, oats and corn. This reputation extends to processed cereal grain products, including: wheat flour, starch, gluten and barley malt. The quality of processed bakery mixes, frozen doughs, breakfast cereals, baked goods, sweet biscuits and cookies is also recognized and opens up many opportunities for Alberta processors to expand and diversify.

"Many cereal-based products are sold as brand name packaged goods," says McGregor. "The bakery, flour milling and pasta industries have recently been enjoying growth by developing private-label brands for retail grocery stores. Oriental noodles, wheat flour, dry pasta, cookies and granola bars are all experiencing more than eight per cent annual growth in sales volume in Canada."

There are over 650 Canadian based cereal grain product manufacturers in Canada. Combined value of their shipments exceeds $4 billion per year.

"The increased demand for specialty and ethnic foods, many based on cereal grains, means additional chances for Alberta processors to expand product lines," adds McGregor. "Pizza, tacos, burritos, fajitas, nachos, oriental noodles, pastas and pita bread are all cereal based."

A large number of specialized wholesale-retail bakery firms produce English muffins, bagels, croissants, cakes, pastries and ethnic breads. The popularity trends in these unique foods presents many opportunities for new market entrants, small and medium-sized food processors.

Contact: *Janice McGregor*
(403)939-4351

Let's talk weed control

Weed control starts by looking at the weed situation, knowing what weeds are present and whether or not they will be a problem. Scouting fields every year and keeping a record of what weeds are present helps to identify control problems quickly.

"Many farmers in Alberta have been battling some very troublesome weeds during the past few years," says Fred Young, forage crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Ox-eye daisy, tall buttercup, Canadian thistle, wild caraway and scentless chamomile (mayweed) are particularly hard to control in forage crops. The key to controlling and stopping these weeds is to keep them from getting established."

Fertility and healthy growing crops can keep some of these weeds from getting a root hold in the field. To understand how fertility can be used as a control agent, first examine how certain weeds like to grow. By comparing the ideal growing conditions for weeds, such as Canadian thistle, scentless chamomile, ox-eye daisy and tall buttercup, to the ideal growing conditions for the intended crop and you get an excellent picture of how the weed and crop will interact.

"Let's consider Canadian thistle. It favours unshaded, moist, generally well-aerated clay loam soils," says Young. "This thistle starts out slowly and can only establish if competition is limited and the light intensity is high. A healthy forage stand can compete well with thistle seedlings and a good fertility program helps ensure a healthy stand. However, once established, Canadian thistle responds well to nitrogen fertilizer."

Ox-eye daisy doesn't grow well when fertilized. In research trials at Evansburg and Winfield, ox-eye daisy was successfully removed after two years of fertilization. This incredible response was partly because the hay crop also responded to the fertilizer and helped eliminate the daisy.

"Scentless chamomile is another example of a plant that cannot compete very well in an aggressive and healthy forage stand," adds Young. "Scentless chamomile can act as an annual, biennial or a short-lived perennial. It can produce 300,000 seeds that can be easily transported by wind, water and man. Be sure to control weeds in fence lines, ditches and around sloughs to prevent them from spreading into fields."

Cont'd on page 4

Tall buttercup is best controlled using both good fertility and a herbicide. Buttercup plants like fertilizer. For the best results, use an early May application of MCPA amine at 1.8 litres per acre and a good fertility program.

"A good fertility programs is an integral part of a good weed control program," says Young.

Contact: *Fred Young*
(403)727-3673

Improving rural family life

Alberta Women's Institutes (AWI) is a provincial nonprofit organization, founded in Alberta in 1909. Its key goal is to improve family life in, mostly, rural areas. Women's Institutes have played an active and vital role in the development of rural Alberta and the agriculture industry.

"The AWI underwent a significant change recently. In October 1996, Walter Paszkowski, Minister of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development announced that the Women's Institute Act was being transferred from Alberta Justice to the Rural Development division of AAFRD," says Janet Halberg, chairperson AWI. "This change reflects AWI participation in cooperative ventures in farm safety, agricultural education and training, and leadership development."

This April, in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Women's Institutes movement, AWI will publish *Tractor Trouble* by David Poulsen – the first in a series of allegorical children's books on farm safety.

"The Alberta Women's Institutes would like to express their gratitude to the Canadian Agriculture Safety Program for project funding and to the provincial Farm Safety Program for technical expertise and support," says Halberg.

In keeping with the change in responsibility, the AWI has found a new home! On March 1, 1997, AWI joined REDA at their new location, Suite 220, 10403 - 172 Street, Edmonton, AB T5S 1K9. The phone number has changed to (403)488-5282.

"Alberta Women's Institutes looks forward to a continued heritage of service and accomplishment through volunteer hours and partnership programs," adds Halberg.

Contact: *Janet Halberg*
(403)488-5282

Time to check the pruning tools

The first few weeks of warm sunshine make many itch to start planning this year's garden, orchard and yard improvements. Before these next few weeks disappear, take advantage of the time to ensure you have the right tools on hand and to get pruning tools and gardening tools in shape. Having good tools and caring for them makes the job of pruning easier and more enjoyable.

"A basic pruning tool set of a pair of pruning shears called secateurs, long handled loppers and a saw will handle most pruning jobs," says Shelley Barkley, horticulture information officer with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The secateurs cut branches less than 2 cm, that's about a thumb width. Cutting branches larger than this bends the blades out of alignment and leaves a jagged cut. There are two basic types, anvil and scissor action. Scissor-type pruners cut cleaner and the narrow hook makes cuts flush to the collar easier. That means less chance of leaving stubs."

A good fitting pair of secateurs make pruning easier on the muscles of the hand. When picking this tool allow for your fingers to naturally curl around the fully extended handles. Stretching your hand means the pruners are too big for your. The handles should not pinch or gouge your hand, either. Callouses make pruning a painful experience. Most of the scissor action pruners are designed for right-handed gardeners but there are a few manufacturers that make left-handed secateurs.

"Long handled loppers are used to cut branches from two to five centimetres," says Barkley. "The handles are usually made from wood, steel or aluminum. Look for a pair with well attached handles, scissor action and a bumper stop just behind the pivot point. The stop cushions against the shock that can run up the handles into the operator's arms when the branch is cut."

Branches over five centimetres are easiest to cut with a saw. Carpentry saws have teeth too close together. The teeth of pruning saws are wide angled and set further apart so they won't gum up with resins from the tree. Some cut on the push stroke, some on the pull and others on both. Pruning saws also come in a variety of shapes, with a variety of blades and handles, too. Try matching the saw shape to the pruning job. A bow saw will cut almost anything a chain saw will cut and could be more saw than the home gardener needs though since it is meant to cut larger diameter branches. Narrow, short-bladed saws may be the most useful for people with a few trees and shrubs to prune. They make it easier to get into tight pruning spots and also the sawing action tends to be easier. Saw handles come banana-shaped, D-shaped or pistol-gripped. The D-shape protects the hand but which ever feels the most comfortable is a good choice.

Cont'd on page 5

"Extra tools may be necessary," adds Barkley. "Hedge clippers can be either electrical or manual. Which you pick depends on how much exercise you want to get. A combination pruning saw and lopper on a telescoping pole is really handy to prune up to three metres high without a ladder."

Good equipment is an investment, caring for it will extend its life. When cutting with the loppers and the secateurs never twist the handles to work the blade through the wood. This will spring the blades and make the tool useless. When dipping the blades in a disinfectant, such as bleach, wash and dry the tools well. Once dry, oil the blades with a light oil before putting them away. Put saws in a scabbard or fold a folding saw when not in use, this extends the life of the blade and protects people from injury.

Lastly, let's talk about protective equipment, this is as important as the saw and the secateurs," says Barkley. "Gloves are a must, not just for pruning raspberries or roses, but even poplar. They help protect hands from the slips that can happen. Safety glasses or goggles protect eyes from sawdust or falling branches. Work safely and work smart -pruning can be fun."

Contact: *Shelley Barkley*
(404)362-1305

Herbs and spices

Growing herbs and spices is a whole different ball game from growing wheat, barley or canola. There is usually no established market and no marketing infrastructure. Therefore, they require more planning, research and commitment than traditional crops.

"If you're interested in growing herbs, there are basically three potential markets for herb growers to access: direct sales, restaurant and contract," says Kerry Engel, rural development specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Direct sales is probably the most feasible for an existing u-pick or market garden selling to an existing customer. Further investment into this market would include a demo garden, handouts, recipes and one labourer. If you have an unestablished market your costs will be higher and could possibly include equipment, marketing, land and others."

Chefs at up-scale restaurants provide another market for fresh cut herbs and edible flowers. Minimum further investment for this venture would include one acre of land, a minimum of two people, walk-in coolers and a vehicle.

"Fresh cut herb growers need to be fairly close to urban populations," says Engel. "You need knowledgeable staff and a good understanding of who the customer is and what they want. You need to be able to establish a relationship with the customer and be willing to introduce chefs to new herbs such as garlic scapes and pineapple sage. This type of venture is labour intensive and because of a lack of fresh herbs in the winter you can loose your market."

Popular herbs for this industry include: basil, garlic, parsley, dill, chives, rosemary, oregano, sage, cilantro, thyme and marjoram. Popular edible flowers include: nasturtiums, lemon gem, tangerine marigolds, Johnny jump-ups, roses, lavender, chives, garlic chive blossoms, dianthus, bee balm chrysanthemums, flowers of edible herbs. Sprays should not be used on these products.

"There are contracts available for growing two to three acres of the same herb," adds Engel. "These products are generally for medicinal products and manufacturers of essential oil products. This type of venture would require a minimum of one year of research, contact building, one or more acres of land and special equipment. Don't do contract growing without a contract!"

If you're considering getting into the production of herbs and spices think carefully about the following rules:

- learn about the market before you grow the crop;
- herb and spice production is more labour intensive than traditional crop production;
- understand what level of processing the markets expect, and where the processing will be completed;
- more time must be spent in marketing than in production of herbs and spices;
- do your research – take a year to learn how the crop grows on your farm. Learn water requirements, susceptibility to insect and disease problems, and harvest techniques;
- start small – a large mistake in a small area is only a small mistake, but a small mistake in a large area is a large mistake.

To assist Albertans interested in investigating these niche markets, a workshop is being held on March 17 in Stony Plain; March 18 in Westlock; March 19 in Athabasca; and, March 20 in Morinville. For information or to register for the workshop, contact Engel at (403)349-4465.

Contact: *Kerry Engel*
(403)349-4465
Ken Lopetinsky
(403)674-8213

Stan Blade
(403)422-1789

Agri-News Briefs

Leading edge – pulse seminar

Peas and other pulse crops are the topic of discussion at the Leading Edge Pulse Seminar and Trade Show being held in the Westlock Community Hall on Monday, March 24, 1997. New varieties of peas and other pulses, crop rotations, and market potential for these crops are some of the issues that make up the agenda for this one-day seminar. The trade show will feature displays and product information from a variety of industry representatives. Pre-registration by March 20 is required, cost of the seminar is $20 per person. The seminar is sponsored by: Alberta Pulse Growers Commission – Zone 3, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Participating Industry and the Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative. For more information or to register, contact the Barrhead district office at (403)674-8213.

Functional foods and nutraceuticals

A seminar on functional foods and nutraceuticals that provides information on this relatively new and growing market is being held in four locations in Alberta. The seminar is an opportunity to learn the definitions and terminology, health benefits, international legislation and regulations and market trends of this industry. Dr. Susan Lutz, projects manager of the food processing development centre, and Ed Phillipchuk, MSC, trade director - Asia Pacific, both with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development are keynote speakers for this one-day seminar. Dates and locations are:
Calgary – March 11; Lethbridge – March 12;
Grande Prairie – March 18; and, Edmonton – March 19.
The seminar is sponsored by the Dairy Nutrition Council of Alberta, the Alberta Registered Dietitians Association and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. Cost of the seminar is $10 per person and pre-registration with payment is required one week prior to the event. For further information, contact the Dairy Nutrition Council of Alberta at 1-800-252-7530 or (403)453-5942 in Edmonton.

Bless your little pea pickin hearts'

A series of workshops are being held in Alberta on two topics of interest to pea and pulse crop growers. ***What's New in Pea Production*** is being offered in the following locations:
Stony Plain – March 17; Athabasca – March 19;
Radway – March 19; and Morinville – March 20.
This workshop covers topics such as: what's new in pea research; update on variety performance; new registrations, variety and variability/standability; rotations; and a pea inoculant update. ***Diversification with New Pulse & Special Crops*** is being offered in the following locations:
Stony Plain – March 17; Westlock – March 18;
Athabasca – March 19; and Morinville – March 20.
Topics include: why diversify, reasons and trends; growing new crops, production pitfalls and successes; preparing your business and marketing plans; and a discussion of special crops tested in Alberta. For more information or to register, contact Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Barrhead district office at (403)674-8213.

A taste of Alberta

The Alberta Bison Association is holding a premiere education session on bison meat for Alberta chefs on March 9 to 11, 1997. Being held at the Lodge at Kananaskis, this professional development session on cooking with bison covers a range of topics from quality, nutrition, market availability to a taste of Alberta showcase. The session is an opportunity to network with a forum of Alberta food suppliers and distributors. The chefs participating in the session will create new meals that are unique to this province, cooking with food products donated by Alberta food producers and processors, from edible flowers to wild rice and bison meats. For further information, contact Tracey Feist (403)932-7595.

Interim pork specialist for the northeast region

Art Lange, pork specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, was appointed as the interim pork specialist for the northeast region. He is filling in for Irene Wenger who is on educational leave. This is a temporary assignment. Art is in Vermilion, usually, two days a week. He continues his work on regional matters out of an office in Edmonton the rest of the week. Lange's job is to provide extension service and assistance to pork producers in northeastern Alberta as well as promoting department initiatives to increase pork production. He can be reached at (403)853-8128 in Vermilion or at (403)427-5096 in Edmonton. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE line.

Agriculture Week Dinner

The County of Mountain View #17 is hosting a special Agriculture Week dinner on Friday, March 14, 1997 at the Olds College Alumni Centre. The evening is designed to raise awareness of value-added agriculture industries in Alberta and in the County. Guest speaker Alan Hall, regional director with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, will address the potential of value-added agriculture in the province. Also featured this year is local cowboy poet Jordie Thomson. A number of agriculture displays and additional information from industry participants will be available. For more information or tickets ($12.50 per person), call Larry Rice at the County of Mountain View office (403)335-3311.

Feedlot management

Cattle backgrounders and finishers can now use a new guide to educate themselves and train their staff. The ***Alberta Feedlot Management Guide*** has been developed with the cooperation of the Feeder Associations of Alberta Ltd. and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. The guide provides practical information that can enhance production efficiency and management skills in western Canadian feedlots and be used in day-to-day operations. The guide provides information and solutions on: avoiding environmental problems; using new protein requirements; improving disease resistance in feeders through proper nutrition; understanding the main causes of AIP (Acute Interstitial Pneumonia); finding the best sources of market information; using Internet effectively; building constant flow watering systems; and, keeping highly productive employees. To keep the guide current and up to date new factsheets will be written and existing factsheets will be revised on a regular basis as new information becomes available. The guide is available through the Feeder Associations of Alberta Ltd., Box 4190, Barrhead, AB, T7N 1A2, or call (403)674-5381, fax (403)674-6969. Cost is $90.00 (GST included) plus shipping and handling.

Coming agricultural events

World Potato Congress
Durban, South Africa, March 2 - 7
World Potato Congress, Inc. (902)368-8885,
Charlottetown, PEI; fax - (902)682-2225

Global Market Focus for Farm Profits
Fairview, March 3, 1997
Murray Davison 1-800-449-2105

Practical Marketing of Your New Venture
Cochrane, March 4, 1997
Jackie Anderson (403)443-8525, Three Hills;
Delin Sheehan-Millang (403)556-4220, Olds

Ag-Expo and North American Seed Fair
Whoop-Up Park
Lethbridge, March 5 - 8
Twyla Gurr (403)328-4491; fax (403)320-8139;
e-mail Whoopup@agt.net

Practical Marketing of Your New Venture
Drumheller, March 5, 1997
Jackie Anderson (403)443-8525, Three Hills;
Delin Sheehan-Millang (403)556-4220, Olds

Ag-Expo 1997
Lethbridge Exhibition Grounds
Lethbridge, March 5 - 8
Twyla Gurr (403)329-4491

Practical Marketing of Your New Venture
Red Deer, March 6, 1997
Jackie Anderson (403)443-8525, Three Hills;
Delin Sheehan-Millang (403)556-4220, Olds

Angora Goat Kidding Seminar
In conjunction with the Alberta Mohair Producers
Association Meeting
Frangora Farm
Hay Lakes, March 9
Michael Francetic (403)878-3230

Grocery Showcase West '97
Vancouver Trade and Convention Centre
Vancouver, B.C., March 9 - 10
Contact: (604)683-1231, Vancouver, B.C.

Agriculture Week
March 9 - 15, 1997

Prairie Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Conference
Royal Oak Inn
Brandon, Manitoba, March 9 - 11, 1997
Stan Blade (403)422-1789, e-mail: blade@agric.gov.ab.ca
Or contact: (204)726-6359,
e-mail www.docker.com/~gordona/conf.htm

Native Fruit (Chokecherry) Workshop
Killam Community Centre
Killam, March 11
Fiona Briody, PFRA, (403)854-4448, Hanna, or
fax(403)854-4989

A Safe Farm is a Great Place to Grow
National Farm Safety Week
March 12 - 19
Solomon Kyeremanteng (403)427-4227 or
Eric Jones (403)427-4231

Is High Tech for Your Farm?
Three Hills Provincial Building
Three Hills, March 11
Jackie Anderson or Dorothy Stewart (403)443-8525

Functional Foods & Nutraceuticals
Agriculture Centre
Lethbridge, March 12
Alberta Dairy & Nutrition Council 1-800-252-7530

Problem Weed Control for Reduced Tillage
Cardston, March 12
Rob Dunn (403)381-5119

Direct Seeding into Sod Seminar
Rainy Creek Conservation Club
Bentley, March 12
Harvey Brink (403)748-2777 or Orest Litwin (403)782-6601

AgVenture Opportunities Plus
Provincial Building
Three Hills, March 13
Jackie Anderson (403)443-8525, Three Hills

75th Annual Meeting of the Canadian Horticultural Council
Charlottetown, PEI, March 13 - 15
Ronna Reddick (613)226-4187, Ottawa, Ontario

Agriculture Week Dinner
County of Mountain View #17
Olds College Alumni Centre
Olds, March 14
Larry Rice (403)335 - 3311, Olds

Alberta Ginseng Association Annual Meeting
Margaret Parson's Theatre
Red Deer, March 14 - 15
Stan (403)675-2799

Smoky River Agricultural Trade Show
Knights of Columbus Hall, Arena & Curling Rink
Falher, March 14 - 16
Roch Bremont (403)837-2211

Functional Foods and Nutraceuticals
Provincial Building
Grande Prairie, March 18
Registration and information - 1-800-252-7530

Alberta Pork Congress
23rd annual industry salute to Alberta's pork industry
Westerner Park
Red Deer, March 18 - 20
APC: (403)244-4487, Calgary; fax: (403)422-2340;
e-mail: apc@incentre.net;
Website: http://www.assocworldwide.com/apc

Home and Garden Trade Show
Exhibition Pavilion
Lethbridge, March 19 - 22
Barb Tate (403)328-4491; fax (403)320-8139;
e-mail whoopup@agt.net

International Conference on Agricultural Production and Nutrition
Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.A. March 19 - 21, 1997
William Lockeretz-Tufts University-Medford, MA 02155
e-mail: wlockeretz@infonet.tufts.edu

Alberta Foundation for Animal Care Annual Meeting
Crossroads Hotel
Calgary, March 20
Contact: (403)777-0445, Calgary

Gala '97 Food and Beverage Show
Northlands Agricom
Edmonton, March 21 - 23
Contact: (403)436-8000, fax (403)436-8009

Farm and Ranch Show
Northlands Agricom
Edmonton March 26 - 29, 1997

Global Affair '97, First International Ostrich Conference
Kananaskis Lodge
Kananaskis Country - April 4 - 6, 1997
Sharon Fisk (403)932-3832, Cochrane or
Alberta Ostrich Breeders Assoc. 1-800-416-0301

Gathering of Cowboy Poets
Lethbridge & District Exhibition
Lethbridge, April 4 - 6
Teresa Ternes (403)328-4491; fax (403)320-8139
e-mail whoopup @agt.net

Red Deer & District Kennel Club Dog Show
Westerner Altaplex
Red Deer, April 4 - 6
Anita Johnston (403)963-6990, Stony Plain

Pruning Workshop
Devonian Botanic Garden
Edmonton, April 6
Course Registration – (403)987-2064

B.C. Foodservice Expo '97
BC Place Stadium
Vancouver, B.C., April 6 - 8, 1997
George Acs 1-800-663-4482

Northwest Food Service Show
Convention Centre, April 12 - 14, 1997
Portland, Oregon
Sherise Snodgrass (503)625-6256, Wilsonville, OR
1-800-645-7350, or e-mail: foodshownw@aol.com

ARFEX 97 - Alberta Restaurant & Food Expo
Northlands Agricom
Edmonton, April 15 - 16, 1997
Contact: 1-800-461-9762

Whoop-Up Quarter Horse Circuit
Lethbridge & District Exhibition Pavilion
Lethbridge, April 18 - 19
Twyla Gurr (403)328-4491; fax (403)320-8139

Edmonton Kennel Club Dog Show
Northlands Agricom
Edmonton, April 18 - 20
Cathy Cinnamon (403)941-3922 -, New Sarepta

Grocery Showcase West '97
Round Up Centre, Stampede Park
Calgary, April 21 - 22, 1997
Contact (403)488-7184

National Composting Week
Compost - Create a National Treasure
April 28 - May 4
Olds College, Composting Technology Centre (403)556-8281

Eastern Nutrition Conference
Guelph, Ontario, May 6 - 7
Roland Rotter, e-mail: rolland_rotter@isdtcp3.hwc.ca

Second Poultry Meat Outlook Conference
Ottawa, Ontario, May 8 - 9
Canadian Chicken Marketing Agency (613)241-2800, Ottawa, Ontario

Ft. McMurray Kennel Club Dog Show
Thickwood Community Centre
Ft. McMurray, May 17 - 29
Anita Johnston (403)963-6990, Stony Plain

International Symposium on Growing Media and Hydroponics
Windsor, Ontario, May 19 - 25, 1997
Dr. A.P.Papadopoulos (519)738-2251, Harrow, Ontario
e-mail: Papadopoulost@em.agr.ca

Four State Stockyard Team Rodeo
Montana
Diamond, Montana, May 23 - 25
Linda (417)325-6393

High Technology Trade Show
Exhibigtion Pavilion
Lethbridge, May 29 - 31
Twyla Gurr and Lorne Darlington (403)328-4491;
fax (403)320-8139; e-mail whoopup@agt.net

High Adventure Sports, Leisure & Tourism Show
Exhibigtion Pavilion
Lethbridge, May 29 - 31
Barb Tate (403)328-4491; fax (403)320-8139;
e-mail whoopup@agt.net

Fifth International Livestock Environment Symposium
Minneapolis, MN, May 29 - 31
Roland Rotter, e-mail: rolland_rotter@isdtcp3.hwc.ca

Crop Growth Models and Decision Support Systems training course
Semiarid Prairie Agricultural Research Centre
Swift Current, Saskatchewan, June 2 - 13
Dr. Jame (306)778-7258, Swift Current, Saskatchewan;
e-mail - jame@em.agr.ca

National Farm & Ranch Business Management Education Association Annual Conference
"Setting the Financial Pace"
Quality Inn
Salem, Oregon, June 7 - 12
John Caster (503)399-5066, Oregon; Eugene Panasuk
(504)399-5089, Oregon; John Calpas (403)320-3311,
Lethbridge; John Whitehead (403)328-8989, Lethbridge

XVII International Grasslands Congress
Winnipeg, Manitoba and Saskatoon Saskatchewan
June 8 - 19, 1997
International Grasslands Congress Office (403)244-4487,
Calgary; fax (403)244-2340

Provincial Direct Seeding Demonstration
Willingdon, June 10, 1997
Kevin Yaremchuk (403)657-3358, Two Hills

World Conference on Animal Production
Seoul, Korea, June 22 - 26
Dr. Jong K. Ha, Dept. Of Animal Science and Technology,
College of Agriculture and Life Science, Seoul National
University, uweon, Korea 441-74

American Dairy Science Association
Guelph, Ontario, June 22 - 25
J.S. Walton or A. Hill (519)824-4120, Guelph, Ontario

Red Deer Direct Seeding Site Tour
Red Deer, June 26, 1997
Karen Yakimishyn (403)340-5325, Red Deer;
e-mail: yakimis@agric.gov.ab.ca

Bonnyville & District Kennel Club Dog Show
Bonnyville, June 28 - 30
Anita Johnston (403)963-6990, Stony Plain
International Fancy Food & Confection Show
New York, June 29 - July 2, 1997
Contact: (212)482-6440, New York

Western Canada Agronomy Workshop
Saskatoon Inn
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, July 9 - 11
Jim Farrell (613)230-2600, Ottawa, Ontario

11th International Farm Management Congress
University of Calgary
Calgary, July 15 - 19, 1997
Margaret Ann Stroh - (403)220-6229,
e-mail: mastroh@acs.ucalgary.ca

16th International Congress of Nutrition
Montreal, Quebec, July 27 - August 1
Congress secretariat (613)993-7271, Ottawa, Ontario

Poultry Science Association
Pennsylvania State University
Pennsylvania, August 3 - 7
Roland Rotter, e-mail: rolland_rotter@isdtcp3.hwc.ca

Whoop-Up Days Trading Post
Whoop-Up Park
Lethbridge, August 6 - 10
Teresa Ternes (403)328-4491; fax (403)320-8139;
e-mail whoopup@agt.net

77th Annual Conference - Agricultural Institute of Canada, Who Speaks for Agriculture?
Truro, Nova Scotia, August 17 - 20
Brian Crouse or Susan Horne (902)893-6520;
e-mail - AIC97@cadmin.nsac.ns.ca
Internet site: http://www.nsac.ns.ca/www/aic97/index.html

80-20 4-H Celebration
Alberta 4-H Centre
Battle Lake, August 23 - 24
Ted Youck (403)422-4444; e-mail: youck@agric.gov.ab.ca

Fall Renovation & Home Decorating Show
Exhibition Pavilion
Lethbridge, October 16 - 19
Barb Tate (403)328-4491; fax (403)320-8139,
e-mail whoopup@agt.net

Chinook Livestock Classic
Exhibition Pavilion
Lethbridge, October 24 - 25
Twyla Gurr (403)328-4491; fax (403)320-8139;
e-mail whoopup@agt.net

National 4-H Week
November 3 - 9, 1997

Agri-Trade International Farm Equipment Expo
Westerner Park
Red Deer, November 12 - 15
Pat Kennedy (403)347-4491, Red Deer; Fax (403)343-6188

Country Christmas Craft Show
Exhibition Pavilion
Lethbridge, November 28 - 29
Barb Tate (403)328-4491; fax (403)320-8139;
e-mail whoopup@agt.net

Alberta 4-H Leaders' Conference
Red Deer Lodge
Red Deer, January 9 - 11, 1998
Ted Youck (403)422-4444; e-mail: youck@agric.gov.ab.ca

Banff Pork Seminar
Banff Centre
Banff, January 13 - 16, 1998
Aileen Reilly (403)469-4902, Edmonton,
e-mail reilly@oanet.com

Whoop-Up Quarter Horse Circuit
Lethbridge & District Exhibition Pavilion
Lethbridge, April 17 - 19, 1998
Twyla Gurr (403)328-4491; fax (403)320-8139

Ninth International Wheat Genetics Symposium
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, August 2 - 7, 1998
Pierre Hucl (306)966-8667, Saskatoon, SK; Dr. Doug Knott
(306)966-4953, Saskatoon, SK
Internet:
http://www.usask.ca/agriculture/cropsci/winter_wheat/9th_iwgs

Editor's Notes:

1. Alberta communities host a number of local fairs. Because there are so many, they are not listed here. However, an annual list of agricultural society fairs is compiled by the agricultural education and community services branch. The booklet is available by writing Alberta Agriculture Publications Office, 7000-113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6. Please quote Agdex 007.
2. Alberta's agricultural colleges conduct a variety of short courses, workshops and seminars throughout the year. Please contact them directly for a list.

- Fairview College at (403)835-6605 or e-mail registrar@fairviewc.ab.ca
- Lethbridge Community College at (403)320-3311
- Olds College (403)556-8355 e-mail for **The Connection** 73543.2137@compuserve.com
- Lakeland College (Vermilion) (403)853-8400

Coming agricultural events notice

National Library of Canada
Bibliothèque nationale du Canada
3 3286 51255 2205

1. Do you know of any provincial (Alberta), national or international agricultural meetings, conferences or conventions **in 1997 or 1998**? Please give the **name** of the event.

2. What are the **dates**?

3. **Where** is the event being held? Include city or town; hotel and convention centre if known.

4. Please give the name, city or town, and phone number of a **contact person** for each event listed.

5. This form has been completed by (organization). Please include **your telephone number**:

Please return this form by* May 23, 1997 *to:

Agri-News Editor
Communications Division
J.G. O'Donoghue Building, 7000 - 113 Street
Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6
Fax (403)427-2861 or e-mail: palutke@agric.gov.ab.ca

Coming agricultural events is published four times a year in **Agri-News**. The next list will be **June 2, 1997.** Coming events are also updated regularly on Alberta Agriculture's Internet home page **http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca**

CANADIANA

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AGRI-NEWS

March 10, 1997

Agriculture Week in Alberta

March 9 to 15 is Agriculture week and there's a lot more to agriculture than you may realize. Did you know

- Agriculture is a major employer in Alberta. One in three Albertans is either directly employed in primary agricultural industries or in spinoff services and activities such as food and beverage processing
- Alberta's agri-food sector employed 116,200 persons in 1996 making it the third largest industry in the province (8.2 per cent of total employment)
- On an annual basis, Alberta is the second leading generator of farm revenue in Canada after Ontario. In 1996, Alberta farm cash receipts moved up to $6.28 billion accounting for 22 per cent of Canadian total receipts. At $6.63 billion, Ontario's contribution was slightly higher at 23 per cent. Saskatchewan ranked third highest at $5.44 billion (19 per cent)
- Food and beverage processing industries are important to Alberta's economic infrastructure in terms of job creation, adding value to the economy through diversification and development of new products and increased market opportunities at home and abroad. Alberta has over 400 food processors and beverage firms
- At $6.61 billion in shipments for 1996, food and beverage processors make up Alberta's largest manufacturing sector
- One out of six manufacturing jobs is involved in food and beverage processing
- After Ontario and Quebec, Alberta is the third largest processor in Canada
- Alberta maintains the largest cattle population in Canada
- Alberta's agricultural economy is export-oriented, with about 62 per cent of raw agricultural commodities (crops, livestock and livestock products) being exported annually out of province
- The primary destination of Alberta agri-food exports remains the United States. The next three largest markets are Japan, People's Republic of China and Mexico
- In 1996, the top five Alberta agricultural exports to other countries were wheat ($1,046 million), live cattle ($748 million), beef/pork/other meat and meat products ($765 million), canola seed ($371 million), and barley (224 million). These commodities, combined, accounted for 71 per cent of Alberta's total agri-food exports in 1996 ($4,423 million)

"Each year, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development produces the Agriculture Statistics Yearbook for Alberta," says Ann Stankiewicz, research economist with the Market Analysis and Statistics Branch. "The 1995 edition of the yearbook is now available. It is a valuable information resource tool for

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

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producers and processors as they plan for the future. The Yearbook provides a comprehensive collection of agricultural statistics and basic economic information that agri-businesses, agri-food exporters, market researchers, strategic planners, government departments and agencies will find valuable.

The cost of the publication is $25, plus GST. It can be ordered by contacting the Market Analysis and Statistics Branch, #302, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6, phone (403)427-4011, or fax: (403)427-5220.

Agriculture is diversifying at an amazing rate in Alberta. Producers are looking to new crops, specialty crops, alternative livestock and fish rearing to expand their markets. Niche markets and specialty markets opportunities make Agriculture an interesting industry to be involved in.

Contact: Ann Stankiewicz
(403)427-4011

National Farm Safety Week

A Safe Farm is a Great Place to Grow – is the theme of this year's Farm Safety Week in Alberta. Farm Safety Week runs from March 12 to 19, 1997 and throughout the province, events are being held to promote farm safety.

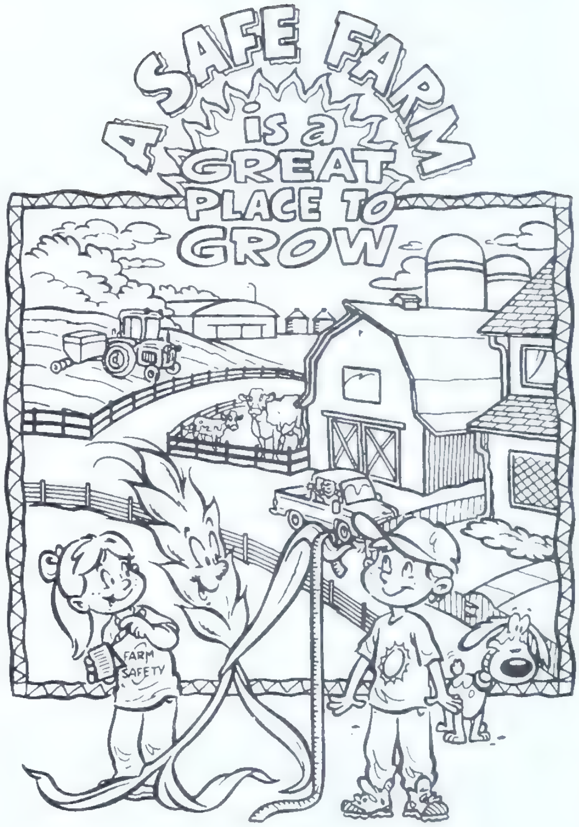
"Farm safety isn't just a week long campaign," says Solomon Kyeremanteng, manager of the farm safety program with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Safety needs to be part of day to day operations on Alberta farms, each day, every day, all year long. Alberta farmers are one of the province's greatest assets and we need them to feed us and the rest of the world."

Throughout Farm Safety Week, March 12 - 19, several radio stations in Alberta are giving away colourful *A Safe Farm is a Great Place to Grow* T-shirts and stylish John Deere caps. All listeners have to do is phone in to the participating radio station with a correct question after hearing an answer on a farm safety topic.

Other activities during this farm safety promotion week include staff giving interviews to newspaper, radio and television.

"Let's change gears!" says Kyeremanteng. "Backing up our farm safety messages with the number of deaths and injuries isn't taking us where we want to go. We need to move forward with positive messages ... messages that offer support and encouragement. A type of persuasive appeal that works well in our homes, schools and workplaces. Let's focus on what we want to achieve rather than what we don't want. After all *A Safe Farm is a Great Place to Grow*!"

Many organizations in one way or another, continue to get the farm safety messages to farmers, farm workers and farm families. These include: Alberta Women's Institutes, United Farmers of Alberta, TransAlta Utilities, Nova, John Deere Limited, Women of Unifarm and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.


A SAFE FARM is a GREAT PLACE TO GROW
FARM SAFETY

Contact: Solomon Kyeremanteng
(403)427-4227

Buying or selling – check the 'General Store'

The Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development Internet site has an on-line information section where producers and farmers can electronically submit listings for grain, feed or livestock for sale. The *General Store* is a searchable database that allows farmers to list their products and lets buyers check out the asking prices.

"This free on-line service is proving to be of great benefit to producers and buyers," says Gerard Vaillancourt, communications specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Using this service, farmers can go to one source to check out what is available and at what prices. For grain, hay and pasture, the information is listed by region and that helps farmers make comparisons of how prices and availability differ in various areas of the province. Livestock listings include addresses but are not set out by region."

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"Making it easier to market, sell and purchase commodities is the purpose of this section of Agriculture's Internet site," adds Vaillancourt. " Sellers can post listings on the service as well as use it to check availability. Buyers can use the database to find what they are looking for and get the information to contact producers directly. There is a *Feed Grain Needed* section where specific requirements and grain or pasture needs can be listed."

Producers who aren't on the Internet can still take advantage of this service by visiting or phoning their district office. Staff at the district offices will post listings, search and print off local listings at the office or fax them out.

"Many farmers and producers are already using the service," says Vaillancourt. "It isn't a buying and selling service, it's an information service. It brings buyers and sellers together and makes it easier to get fair market value. As Albertans continue using the on-line listings, they will find they have a very helpful, time saving tool at their fingertips."

The *General Store* contains seven sections: Alberta feed and pasture for sale; livestock for sale or lease; Alberta grain for sale; Alberta Agri-business on the Web; video sales listings; agricultural software directory; and, sources for obsolete or hard-to-find farm implement parts. The sections are easy to access whether you need information or want to post information.

The General Store offers Alberta specific and regional specific information. This is a managed list and postings updated regularly. Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Internet address is **http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/** . From the homepage, click on *General Store* and then select the section you want to search.

Contact: *Gerard Vaillancourt*
(403)422-6796
e-mail: **vaillan@agric.gov.ab.ca**

Essential oil – distilling our share

In 1990, Alberta did not produce any commercial quantities of essential oils. Since the amount of essential oils produced in province has grown rapidly over the past years to approach 200,000 lbs from approximately 3000 acres of land in 1996.

"Growth potential in this market depends upon market availability and environmental conditions," says Dr. Refe Gaudiel, special crops research agronomist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's crop diversification centre – south. "The USDA forecast is for approximately 10 per cent growth of the essential oil industry in the U.S., reaching about $600 million by the year 2000. The U.S. is currently Alberta's largest market for essential oils exports."

The type of crops grown in province used for essential oil production are primarily peppermint, spearmint and dill These essential oils are used to flavour a number of food and beverage products

In 1995, total peppermint imports to the U.S. was approximately seven per cent in the amount and four per cent of the value of the U.S. production. Total spearmint imports to the U.S. was approximately 33 percent/amount and 18 percent/value of U.S. production. Canada's share, of which Alberta is the major producer, of the total value imported to the U.S. was approximately 10 per cent for peppermint and 44 per cent for spearmint. Alberta's peppermint and spearmint acreage is approximately 0.2 per cent and 8.5 per cent of that of the U.S., respectively.

"There are two large commercial distillation facilities for essential oil extraction located in Bow Island and Carmangay, and a small start-up unit is developing in the Arrowood/Gleichen area," says Gaudiel. "These facilities can service approximately 3000 to 4000 acres of crops. Ideally, the crop should be planted close to the distillation facility. Additional distillation facilities in the future will depend on the growth of the industry. A portable distillation unit is possible, although the infrastructure for servicing this unit for power, water and drainage must be available in each distillation site.'

"Growth potential appears to be gradually increasing, overall," says Gaudiel. "In Alberta, growth of the essential oil industry will depend on market availability and our ability to meet the demand of that market when the window of opportunity opens wider. Other niche markets may involve essential oils in smaller demands, such as dill and basil."

Contact: *Refe Gaudiel*
(403)362-1355

Mild February weather gives mid-winter break

February weather was warm with above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation totals.

"February started with above normal temperatures in the south and near normal temperatures in the north," says Peter Dzikowski, Agri-weather resource specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Above normal temperatures continued in southern Alberta during the second week of February, and were near to below normal in the north. In southern Alberta daily maximum temperatures reached 10 to 15 degrees C in mid February. During the last two weeks of February temperatures remained near to above normal."

The provincial average temperature was 3.8 degrees above the 1961 to 1990 average of -9.5 degrees C. Most Alberta locations reported monthly average temperatures one to 6.5 degrees above normal. The greatest temperature departures of about

Cont'd on page 4

5.6 degrees above normal were reported in the north western region.

Crowsnest Pass reported the smallest temperature departure, 1.7 degrees warmer than the monthly normal temperature of -4.9 degrees.

"The provincial average precipitation of 9.3 mm was 7.5 mm below the 1961 to 1990 average of 16.8 mm," says Dzikowski. "These averages are based on data recorded at 48 Environment Canada climate stations across Alberta."

All regions reported about a third to two thirds of February normal precipitation. Amounts of 2 to 26.2 mm, or 6 to 138 per cent of normal were reported. Olds was an exception, reporting 20.5 mm of precipitation, 138 per cent of the normal February precipitation of 14.8 mm.

Contact: *Peter Dzikowski*
(403)422-4385

Gearing up for spring

The pruning of trees, whether young or old, depends on: its purpose, is it a windbreak, street, shade or ornamental tree, and its form and growth habit.

"Ash and elm are slow growers that benefit from training early in their life," says Shelley Barkley, horticulture information officer with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Aim for wide angled, U-shaped crotches, they're structurally stronger. Birch need very little pruning but an occasional trim will make mowing the grass under them easier. Try to avoid letting the main trunk fork within one to two metres from the ground, this can be a weak spot in the tree where it could split or break. They will fork again naturally at three to four metres from the ground and this is fine. Prune these 'bleeders' in June, once they have four or five leaves out on the branches."

Larch and oak will need little pruning since they naturally grow in a pleasing shape, be sure to remove any double leaders. Thinning the crown of maples allows for good air circulation. Prune maple, like birch, in June.

Mountain ash, flowering crabapples, hawthorns, mayday, chokecherry and pincherry are trained with a strong scaffold branch system. Prune these before they flower. These can be grown as a single or multi-stemmed tree. The branches of Amur cherries tend to have narrow crotches (V-shaped) prune to correct this. All these trees can produce root suckers, remove these as close to the source of growth as possible.

"The poplar is the most commonly abused when it comes to pruning," says Barkley. "Poplars are best used in areas with lots of space. Prune and train these early in their life, as they heal very slowly. Willow tend to be a low headed tree, meaning the branches grow all along the trunk from the ground up. Start pruning early in the tree's life to a single stemmed specimen."

Evergreens, grown as specimens require very little pruning, removing only dead, dying or broken branches. Should the leader be damaged, remove it and tie a lateral branch up to form a new leader. If this is not done, the tree will naturally grow two or three leaders that will grow into two or three main trunks. This becomes a weak spot in the tree and can break out.

"Removing evergreen branches can be done the same as deciduous trees," adds Barkley. "Remember to be careful when removing whole branches, as the buds that can still grow along the branch are limited. This means that the removal of old wood can leave holes in the canopy of the tree."

Removing part of the candle, or new growth, makes evergreens bushier and helps control their size, somewhat. Break this growth in late May or June. Pinch the new growth of pines with your fingernails, spruce can be sheared. Do this after the buds have elongated but before the new needles have opened out.

"There are two kinds of flowering shrubs grown in our yards, those that flower in spring and those that don't," says Barkley. "The spring bloomers, like lilac, flowering plums and cherries, form flower buds during the previous growing season. The summer flowering shrubs, potentilla and many of the spireas, form their flower buds in spring. Pruning spring flowering shrubs before they flower means that potential blossoms are removed. The best time to prune these is after they flower. The summer flowering plants can be pruned while they are dormant in the spring as the flowers haven't been formed yet. When in doubt, leave it for next time, because you can't put it back."

Contact: *Shelley Barkley*
(404)362-1305

Pass the pasta

Alberta's fresh pasta industry is dominated by smaller companies whose markets are limited to Alberta and western Canada. Most processors sell exclusively to the food service sector; a few have retail sales. Historically, the dry pasta market was dominated by national and multi-national companies.

"Pasta is making its mark as one of the fastest growing food categories in North America," says Janice McGregor. "In Canada, annual per capita consumption has doubled since 1970, from 7.7 pounds to 13 pounds. Growth is being generated, in part, by nutritional buying patterns of consumers. Albertans are realizing that pasta is good for them. It's non-fattening, low in calories and a good source of carbohydrates. Pasta's healthy image has increased consumption at home and in restaurants."

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In the year ending March, 1996, consumers dished out over $169 million to Canadian grocery stores for dry pasta products. Spaghetti and macaroni continue to dominate the dry pasta market. However, new varieties of penne, rotini and rigatoni are starting to claim their market share.

"Fresh pasta presently accounts for 1.5 per cent of all pasta sales," adds McGregor. "Currently, fresh pasta is experiencing annual growth of 16 to 20 per cent. Innovative flavouring in fresh pastas is expected to continue and sales of premium, value-added pastas, such as flavoured specialty cuts, is on the increase."

Next time you're wandering down the pasta aisle of your supermarket or in the pasta section of your local specialty store, take a look at the variety offered, be adventurous, take some home and pass the pasta.

Contact *Janice McGregor*
(403)939-4351

Agri-News Briefs

Global Affair '97

The Canadian Ostrich Association is welcoming the world to the Canadian Rockies. A Global Affair '97 conference is being held at Kananaskis Village in Kananaskis Country, April 4 - 6, 1997. It is an exciting, international opportunity that promises to be informative, interesting and entertaining. Every person, whether an ostrich producer or a person in a related business should plan to attend in order to be part of the cutting edge of the industry. Key speakers from around the world will present a global look at the ostrich industry and hold educational sessions. The conference has many events planned, including a smorgasbord Taste of Canada, an ostrich banquet, a trade fair, an auction featuring some very special items, and workshops on everything from egg cutting and carving, leather accessories, to export regulations and basic first aid treatment for ostrich. Conference registration is $200 per person for COA members and $250 per person for non-members. For more information on the conference or to register, contact Nettie Schultz (403)381-6050; fax (403)381-3060; e-mail **aoba@agt.net** or visit the conference web page **www.agt.net/public/global97/**

Western Canada Agronomy workshop

The third biennial Western Canada Agronomy Workshop is being held at the Saskatoon Inn in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, July 9 to 11, 1997. The workshop addresses recent developments in agricultural information technology, pest and crop management, precision farming, fertility, agronomy and agricultural computer software. The workshop is oriented toward fertilizer dealers, extension staff, university and government researchers, innovative farmers and those interested in the practical application of agronomic technology on the prairies. Features include: invited papers by leading researchers; field tour and demonstrations; bear pit session on agricultural computer software; and, published proceedings of papers distributed at the workshop. Registration is $90 per person, includes meals, tour and workshop proceedings. Registration materials are currently being mailed. For further information, contact Jim Farrell at the Canadian Fertilizer Institute (613)230-2597, Kingston, Ontario or Dr. Terry Roberts at the Potash & Phosphate Institute of Canada (306)652-3535, Saskatchewan.

Get growing

It's the time of year that horticulture businesses are getting ready for spring planting. If you're interested in dried or specialty flowers, ginseng or other special crops you'll want to investigate the new AgVenture factsheets on ginseng (Agdex-FS188/830-2), herbs and spices (Agdex FS263/830-1), fresh vegetable market gardening (Agdex-FS250/830-1), dried flowers (Agdex-FS280/830-1) and essential oils (Agdex-FS188/830-1). If you're looking for someone who might broker, market, export or process your specialty crop, you'll want to pick up a copy of the new Special Crops Directory. The directory compiles a list of people and related association contacts, consultants, laboratories and more. Whatever crop you're looking at planting, don't forget to always keep in mind who your customer is and what they need and want. The customer is the key person in the success of your business. To order any of these publications, contact the Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. For more information on new horticulture ventures, market planning or business planning, contact Kerry Engel, rural development specialist (RDS) with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development at (403)349-4465, she can put you in touch with the RDS closest to you.

Special crops courses

Olds College is offering a 2-day **Specialty Field Flowers** grower training workshop on March 14 and 15, 1997. Sessions will focus on business, design and production. Brochures are available through local agriculture district offices, or contact Olds College at (403)556-4634. **Diversification with Pulses & Special Crops**, a half-day seminar, is being held in Stony Plain on Monday, March 17; Westlock on Tuesday, March 18; Athabasca on Wednesday, March 19; and, Morinville on Thursday, March 20. A panel consisting of technical staff and an experienced grower will answer production and marketing questions regarding the expanding alternative crop industry. For further information on these workshops, or to register, contact Kerry Engel in Westlock (403)349-4465.

Handling inoculant

Inoculant is live bacteria. Care must be taken to ensure it is alive when put in the ground with the seed. When handling this live bacteria, be sure to wear rubber gloves and use caution. Store the inoculant in a dark, cool place until ready to seed legumes. Pre-inoculated seed is available. If you feel that you cannot do a good job of inoculating the seed yourself, use the pre-inoculated seed to ensure that the seed is placed in the soil with live rhizobia. Remember to work safely – **A Safe Farm is a Great Place to Grow!** For more information on safe handling of chemicals, contact the Solomon Kyeremanteng (403)427-4227 or Eric Jones (403)427-4231 of the farm safety program.

New crop specialist in Sedgewick

Mervin Empey was appointed the new cereal and oilseed crop specialist at Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Sedgewick office. Empey will provide leading-edge information to the agriculture industry in areas relating to cereal and oilseed production. By taking part in applied research and demonstration projects, he hopes to develop an information base that will be of benefit to local producers. Born in Boissevain, Manitoba, Empey grew up on a mixed, grain and beef, farm. After graduating with a MSc, agronomy major from the University of Manitoba, he worked for a year as a research associate for Ag Quest , Minto, Manitoba. He then worked for over three years as research coordinator of the North Peace Applied Research Association in Manning, AB before accepting the appointment. "I'm really looking forward to spring and getting 'out in the field' and tackling issues," says Empey. "I want to become more familiar with the people and the area where I'll be working."

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AGRI-NEWS

March 17, 1997

What's that you say

"Once it's gone – it's gone," says Eric Jones, farm safety specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Noise-induced hearing loss is a real problem in the farming community. Noise is something we just seem to live with and never take any precautions against."

The Women of Unifarm, in an attempt to bring attention to farm-related, noise-induced hearing loss, have launched an education campaign on the subject. In the fall of 1996, a *Hearing Safety Hunt* was conducted in Alberta with the cooperation of Alberta 4-H Clubs and Dr. Sue Haske, professor, Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology at the University of Alberta. The 'hunt' surveyed over 100 people to test their awareness of the dangers loud noises pose.

"There were some very telling results from the survey," says Haske. "Younger people seem to be more aware that noise can be a factor in impaired hearing. Once the survey participants completed the 'hunt', significant changes occurred in both the awareness of noise-induced hearing loss and in the knowledge of how to take preventative steps to protect hearing."

Participants in the *Hearing Safety Hunt* answer some basic awareness testing questions and then use a Sound Level Monitor (SLM) to detect and make note of machinery noises and repetitive noises that register at a dangerous decibel level.

"We've tried to make this program very user friendly and one that appeals to children and young Albertans, and sends an effective message to adults, too," says Florence Trautman, president of Women of Unifarm. "We've tried to cover every medium we can, print, video and Club participation. The recently finished video is really getting the point across to our audiences.

"Dennis Weber, an art student at the U of A, designed 'SLiM', the cartoon mascot. SLiM is a stylized SLM who champions the message *Protect your hearing*. We've had some very encouraging feedback on SLiM, including a Gold Design Award from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education."

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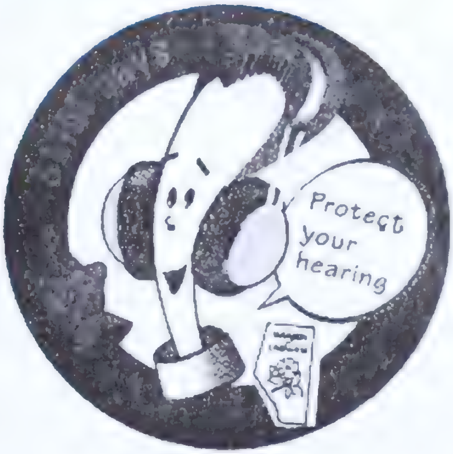

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More than just being catchy and well designed, this campaign sends out a very valuable message to the farming community. Hearing, once it's impaired, does not recover. High decibel output from machinery, and even the repetitive sound of a metal shovel scrapping the bottom of a metal granary, can cause sound-induced damage. When working around the farm, protective earphones or something as simple as spongy ear-plugs can help farmers protect their hearing.

"Rural Albertans are aware of the risk of hearing loss, now we need to work on making hearing protection second nature," says Trautman. "We are continuing to work on this campaign, taking it across Canada. We've received funding support from the Canadian Agriculture Safety Program, the financial arm of the Canadian Coalition for Agricultural Safety and Rural Health.

"By the end of summer, we'll have a pilot project on the Internet introducing SLiM and the campaign. Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Farm Safety Program and 4-H are major partners in this project. Through their work with Alberta youth and with education, awareness and prevention, we hope noise-induced hearing loss will decrease dramatically."

Kits that include information brochures, a copy of the video, a sound level monitor, ear protection (headphones) and 'Protect Your Hearing' stickers are available to 4-H Clubs. Some 4-H Clubs have made the *Hearing Safety Hunt* a Club project.

Contact: *Eric Jones*
(403)427-4231
Florence Trautman
(403)963-6870

Watching cattle basis

At face value, basis is the difference between the proper futures price and the local farm gate price for any commodity. Fancy calculations can be left to competitive buyers; for the producer, basis is just futures less the price at the farm gate.

"Cattle basis is a dramatically changing value," says Doug Walkey, market specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Over the past couple of years, slaughter cattle basis has ranged from roughly $1/cwt all the way up to $15. This variability can affect producer's profit.

"For example, if futures price is $72, the Canadian equivalent is about $97.20. With a $1 basis, producers would enjoy a $96.20 price at the local market. With a $15 basis, the local sale price would be only $82.20."

While basis is important, it also shows how to react to a market. If offered a forward contract with the $1 basis, producers would be wise to grab it. Cattlemen have seen $1 basis only four times since 1990 and only for a few days at a time. On the other hand, if offered an unattractive $15 basis, this may be a contract you want to refuse.

"Basis is only one of the factors," adds Walkey. "If there is a high and profitable futures price behind a $15 basis, producers may find it advantageous to accept. Usually a wide basis is a sign that the forward contract isn't the best choice in this market. A wide basis suggests using futures or options to lock in price and allow the basis to narrow as cattle are finished."

A very narrow basis shouldn't be passed up when prices are trending higher. Producers may want to sign the forward contract to lock in the basis and then re-own the cattle on the futures or options market to participate in climbing prices. A producer, on the other hand, may decide to sign a basis contract to hold the narrow basis, a rare occurrence in cattle circles, and then watch prices rise with some confidence having half the marketing done already.

"There are many strategies that work in cattle markets, these are only a few examples," says Walkey. "Local market or beef specialists at district offices are there to help producers, just call."

Contact: *Doug Walkey*
(403)782-3301

Bring value-added food processing to the farm

Value-added = improvements...improvements for the consumer and your business.

Improvements for the consumer can mean better packaging, added convenience in preparation, fulfilling a need. Improvements for your business can include greater profits and closer contact with the consumer. A question many are asking is, **"Just how do I add value to my operation?"** The answer may be through value-added food processing.

"It wasn't that many years ago that only field potatoes were sold to the consumer," says Kerry Engel, rural development specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "They were packed in various sizes, from a bushel to a burlap sack. They weren't culled, sorted or cleaned. Potatoes were stored by consumers in a cellar basement and they lasted all winter."

As housing and food habits changed, improvements (added value) in the potato business were made. The product was cleaned, culled, size-graded and packed in five & 10 pound units. These were targeted to people who live alone, have smaller families and those who only use potatoes occasionally.

"Food service, the largest market for processed potato products, still offered great opportunities," adds Engel. "But, as convenience became a household word, in home use and the appropriate packaging started being taken into consideration, too."

The potato surged forward with further value being added. Consumers wanted minimal preparation and waste so potatoes

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were pre-peeled, diced, sliced and packaged as hash browns, baked potatoes, partially cooked french fries, and stuffed potatoes.

Potatoes are now canned, frozen, dehydrated and made 'fun' for the snack food and grazing industry. They're cut thick, thin, crinkled, with and without their skins, flavoured, plain, extra crispy, thunder crunched, fat-reduced and made into a variety of shapes.

"Many of these steps can be accomplished right on the farm or in the local community," adds Engel. "Did you know you can purchase a mobile potato chip plant? Information programs to help Albertans learn more about food processing are available. Producers can get information on dates and availability from their local rural development specialist."

Product to Profit – Micro-food Processor Conference, April 9 & 10 at the University of Alberta, addresses emerging opportunities for micro-food processors, product development strategies made easy, exploring alternative markets (gourmet/gift store, direct mail, Internet), creating a company and product image (graphics, packaging and labels), and capitalizing on unique business arrangements.

Contact: Kerry Engel
(403)349-4465

Beef grading is a snap-shot

New research in grading beef is proving to be less subjective and more scientific. Video imaging analysis technology from the Lacombe Research Centre offers the promise of a highly accurate and objective method of beef grading.

"Using special cameras and computer programs, researchers are fine-tuning an evaluation system to fit into today's and tomorrow's processing line speeds," says John Basarab, beef management specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "This grading method means consumers can be more confident in the grade of meat they are purchasing."

The video imaging setup uses two cameras at different points in the production line. The first one views the warm carcass to get a fix on its yield, quantity. The following day, a second camera casts a cool eye over the now cool carcass. It sweeps over the meat to pick out such quality features as colour and marbling.

The data from the two cameras are correlated and an objective analysis of quantity and quality emerges with an all-but-invisible margin of error.

The system is undergoing a major test in a real-life situation, with results due early in 1997," says Alan Tong, a computer vision and modelling scientist with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) who designed the system. "Among the considerations facing the designers are effective waterproof and heat-proof cameras. Tests are planned for this year to further validate the results and develop a predictive equation for yield estimation.

"If test results are favourable, commercialization of the technology should take place in 1997. Project support has been provided by the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, the Canadian Meat Council and Marketing and Industry Services Branch of AAFC."

The Centre is also scrutinizing the applications this technology has for the pork industry. Researchers hope that video imaging can help evaluate meat quality by looking at colour, marbling, and texture.

Researchers hope to develop an evaluation system and new probes that will give a more accurate estimate of pork carcass value. Some of this research is being done in collaboration with Fletcher's Fine Foods.

Contact:	*John Basarab*	*Alan Tong*
	(403)427-4544	*(403)782-8100*

Maintaining healthy trees

Pruning is done to maintain healthy trees. Diseased wood can be a source of infection that can move through the tree and dead wood attracts both insect and other diseases.

"Pruning shapes, controls the size and spread of a tree, removes broken branches and prevents weak crotches that are subject to breaking under fruit or snow loads," says Shelley Barkley, horticulture information officer with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Pruning also promotes flowering and rejuvenates old shrubs."

When wounds are made, trees produce a callus to cover the wound. If the wound isn't covered before disease sets in, the tree forms compartment walls. These walls stop the spread of disease into the tree. Trees vary in their ability to compartmentalize, so make the smallest wound possible to encourage speedy callus formation.

"It's important to understand how the tree reacts when pruned," says Barkley. "Tree branches grow longer from the bud at the end of the branch, this bud is dominant over all the other buds on the branch. When the terminal bud is removed, a near-by bud is then forced to take the lead. New branches grow in the direction the terminal bud points, so cutting to an outward facing bud forces plant growth outward."

When a plant or tree is cut back severely, the nutrients that sustained the entire length of that branch exceed the needs. The plant directs the nutrients into new vigorous growth like water sprouts and suckers. This also results in the plant setting fewer but healthier flower buds that produce large flowers, this can be an advantage when growing prize winning flowers.

"Prune annually, leaving the branch collar intact on the tree," adds Barkley. "The branch collar is the swollen area at the

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base of the branch where it comes off the trunk or another branch. Begin pruning trees while they are young; since the wounds callous faster and there is less stress to the tree."

Pruning is usually done in the dormant season (end of March to end of April) or during early summer to invigorate tree growth. Spring or summer pruning dwarfs the growth. Pruning in late summer (mid-July to August) forces the tree to grow rather than harden properly for winter, this can increase the chance of winter kill. Fall pruning can lead to winter damage to the cambium tissue around the pruning wound. Some trees, such as birch and maple, are 'bleeders'. They have a very high sap pressure in the spring and need to be pruned once the tree has leafed out, in June.

"When pruning, visualize the shape of the plant at maturity as pruning will enhance the shape or detract it from the natural shape of the plant," says Barkley. "The first thing to do is remove the dead, damaged and diseased wood. These can be removed at any time. Sometimes this is all that needs to be done to improve the appearance of the tree and promote a healthier plant."

Make clean cuts and leave no stubs! Make cuts above a bud that is growing in the direction you want the branch to take. To choose the correct angle, place the pruning tool so that the top of the cut is slightly above the top of the bud and the bottom of the cut is even with the bud's bottom.

Sometimes large limbs need to be removed and that calls for a three-step procedure. First cut from the underside halfway through the branch a foot or so out from the trunk. Make the second cut, top side of the branch, a couple inches out from the first cut, through the branch. This removes the weight from the branch and stops the bark from tearing. Thirdly, remove the stub, leaving the collar in tact on the tree trunk.

"Prune spruce and pine when the candles are actively growing, in late May or June," says Barkley. "Break a portion of the new year's growth. This forces the tree to make more new buds for next year making the tree bushier. Removing branches can be done the same as with deciduous trees. Remember, the buds that can still grow are limited in evergreens and removal of old wood can leave permanent holes in the tree."

Shape shade trees early by removing unwanted lower branches, crossed branches and those growing in the wrong direction or location. Pruning and shaping results in a stronger tree.

To take the mystery out of pruning, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development published Pruning In Alberta. The 15-page book shows how to control and maintain your trees and shrubs without distorting their natural form and beauty. It also provides information on how to increase fruit harvest and improve flowering. Cost of the publication is $3 (plus GST) add $2.14 for shipping and handling if ordering by mail. Order copies of Pruning in Alberta through the Publications Office at 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. Credit card orders can be placed by calling 1-800-292-5697.

Contact: Shelley Barkley
(403)362-1305

Plan now for dormant season grazing

Dormant season grazing allows cows to find all or part of their own feed in the late fall, winter or early spring months when forages are dormant. For this to happen without sacrificing the cows' health and productivity, advance planning is required.

"In order to have enough high-quality dormant pasture to meet the nutritional requirements of a beef cow, a weaned calf or a yearling, a plan must be in place at the beginning of the growing season so that forage can be 'banked' for use later on," says Lorne Erickson, crop specialist/forages with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Simply having an extra pasture and allowing it to grow all season may satisfy the quantity requirement, but the quality of such mature grasses may not allow the animals to perform to their potential. Applying some growing season management, such as a well-timed hay cutting or grazing and a mid-season application of fertilizer can ensure that the banked forage is of high-quality."

Once the bank of forage has been established, it can be drawn on in a number of ways. In the fall, the dormant grass can be used first for weaning calves and then later the dry cows can come in and clean up what the calves left behind. If the snow gets too deep or crusted, the cows can finish their clean up in the spring. When the dormant grass is not used in the fall, dry cows can graze it through the snow with a little training and perhaps some supplemental feed. Cows can calve and feed on it in April and May or it can be grazed by yearlings or cows and calves starting in April. Besides providing a low-cost way to wean calves, banked forages have the potential to shorten the feeding season and lengthen profits.

"Ranchers know that winter feed is the single largest expense they incur in producing a beef calf," says Erickson. "A significant portion of winter feeding costs are made up of labour, fuel and machinery costs involved in harvesting, hauling, feeding and removing manure.

"Between 30 and 60 per cent of feed cost is a direct result of these handling expenses. Every additional day of grazing into the dormant season frees up that day's handling cost in stored feeds. Those dollars can be used for extra grazing acres or for better grazing management so that even more dormant season days are available next year."

Contact: Lorne Erickson
(403)843-2201

Information and networking event of the year

Rural development specialists with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development have joined forces with other Alberta Agriculture staff and the food processing industry to bring you ***Product to Profit***, a conference for the micro-food processor, on April 9 to 10, 1997 at the University of Alberta, Edmonton.

"The marketplace, new technology, government ... all are dominant forces in the food processing industry in Alberta," says Kerry Engel, rural development specialist, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Food businesses need to be able to respond to the changes and tailor food product development to prepare for opportunities."

Industry, research and government representatives kick-off the conference by addressing emerging opportunities for the micro-food processor. Representatives from Horne & Pitfield, the U of A and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development will lead the discussion.

"To turn recipes into commercial formulations requires revisions," says Engel. "Jacqueline Gelfand, with the food processing development centre, will discuss converting recipes from volume to weight, sourcing ingredients, the effects of processing on product characteristics and shelf life and quality control."

Finding a market can be a challenge for many small processors. Alternative markets such as: gourmet and gift stores, direct mail (catalogue sales) and the Internet will be explored. Each market has special considerations and issues that need to be addressed. The conference is an opportunity to learn from those who have hands on experience in these markets.

"Portraying the right image for your business, exploring all the marketing alternatives in packaging, labelling and displays, are all aspects of the complete package processors need to be concerned with," adds Engel. "Issues such as logo's, product end use and tamper-proof packaging will be addressed during a session called Creating a Company and Product Image. Representatives from Duck Soup Graphics, Classic Packaging and Richard's Packaging will all be there for attendees to converse with."

Many entrepreneurs have capitalized on unique business arrangements to get their product developed and to market. A panel of processors has been arranged to give some insight into the various advantages and disadvantages of co-processing, co-operatives and other techniques.

Participants at Product to Profit can also take part in tours of the Agri-food research lab at the University and the Food Processing Centre at Leduc. Registration fee for the conference is $75 for two days, and includes all meals. Day rates are available. For further information, contact Kerry Engel (403)349-4465, Westlock.

Contact: Kerry Engel
(403)349-4465

Agri-News Briefs

Public hearings on the review of Bill C-72

The Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, chaired by Mr. Lyle Vanclief, M.P. for Prince Edward-Hastings, is holding public hearings across the Prairies as part of the Bill C-72 review. Bill C-72 is an Act to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act and would change the corporate status of the CWB and the way grain is marketed in Canada. Hearings are being held in **Calgary on March 20** and in **Grande Prairie on March 21, 1997**. The committee will be looking for specific suggestions from the industry to improve the Bill. All those interested in making a presentation on the Bill, must contact the Clerk of the Committee, Marc Toupin (613)995-9461.

No other Rodeo like it

On May 23, 24 & 25, 1997, the Four State Stockyard Team Rodeo will bring together Stockyards and their employees in a Stockyard team battle for a $45,000 purse. This is the only Stockyard Team Rodeo and it's run with ranch rodeo rules, with some very interesting changes. The 'books' opened on March and only the first 30 teams, with entry fees submitted, will compete. Books officially close on April 23, 1997. For further information, the rules and regulations, or to register a team, contact Linda at (417)325-6393, Diamond, Montana.

Cont'd on page 6

Canola variety information revised

The revised issue of the *Varieties of Cereals and Oilseed Crops for Alberta – 1997* is now available. This revised copy includes corrections to the Argentine and Polish canola information tables. The updated tables are replacements for information published in *Varieties of Cereal and Oilseed Crops for Alberta* - 1997 (factsheet - Agdex 100/32); *Alberta Canola Grower, January 1997*; *SeCan 1997 Seed Guide*; and, *Alberta Farm Light and Power 1997 Alberta Seed Guide*. Tables in these publications contained a computer error that affected the yield data. Information for crops other than canola remains unchanged. Copies of the revised issue can be picked up at all Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district offices and at the Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton. For further information, call Jerome Lickacz (403)422-1231 or Dan Heaney (403)422-1236.

Forage Competition

The 11th Annual Alberta Dairy Congress, June 4 to 6, 1997, in Leduc, again includes a forage competition. The competition has six classes: legume hay (>70% legume); grass-legume hay mix (<70% legume); grass hay; haylage; cereal silage; and, export hay (timothy). Producers can enter one exhibit per class. Prizes in each class are $100 for first place, $50 for second place and $25 for third place. There is no entry fee due to the sponsorship from Enviro-Test Laboratories, the company that does the lab analysis for the competition. Sponsors for the classes include Prairie Seeds Inc., Grow Tec Ltd., Cunningham Fertilizers, Leduc Seed Cleaning Plant, Pioneer Hi-Bred Ltd., Pickseeds Canada Inc., Transfeeders. Parkland Fertilizers and UFA-Leduc are also sponsors of the forage competition. To enter, just drop entries off at the nearest Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AFRD) office before March 21, 1997. Hay entries must be securely bound and tied in a 1/2 to one bale size cardboard box. Loose hay will not be accepted. Silage or Haylage samples should be submitted in a suitable airtight container (2 kg or 5 lb) preferably frozen to preserve quality. Clearly label all samples with name, address, crop kind, cut and class. For more information, contact the local AFRD office. Additional information on the Dairy Congress and the Forage Competition can be viewed on the Internet at http://bull.afns.ualberta.ca/kennelly/dairycon.htm.

Organic production and marketing workshop

April 5, 1997 at the Fairview College in Fairview, Alberta is the date and location for the Northern Alberta Organic Production & Marketing workshop. The one-day workshop begins with registration at 8:00 a.m. and should conclude at 5:30 p.m. Topics to be discussed include: an industry overview; soil fertility, season extension, weed control, rotation, crops suited to northern Alberta, and surface rights. This workshop is of special interest to organic producers, interested conventional producers, market gardeners and backyard gardeners. Registration is $35 per person or $50 per family. For more information or to register, contact Pat McIsaac (403)351-2431; fax (403)351-2070.

Best new food product competition

What's the best new food product in the west? Find out at the Western Canadian Conference on the Food Industry being held in Edmonton on May 5 – 6, 1997. Food companies enter the Western Canadian competition by submitting an application by April 1, 1997. Information is available from Alberta Food Processors Association (403)444-2272. Products are judged by a panel of food experts including a food broker, retailer, food service distributor and food writers. The judging criteria include quality, packaging, saleability and marketing plan. The top three products are recognized and presented an award at the conference. All participants get feedback from the judges. There is also an opportunity for the products to be featured at the conference reception on the evening of May 5. The competition is a learning opportunity for entrepreneurs and good publicity for the winning products. For information, contact Randi Sandbu (403)422-1934, or Peggy Marce (403)444-2272, Edmonton.

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CANADIANA
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AGRI-NEWS
March 24, 1997

Information that can save farmers money

To meet your pesticide, herbicide and other chemical treatment needs for this year's crops, get the information you need to make the best decisions. The ***Crop Protection With Chemicals*** guide is produced each year to keep Alberta farmers up to date with information on herbicides, insecticides, fungicides and rodenticides.

"Commonly known as the *Blue Book*, the 1997 issue is even easier to use than in previous years'," says Shaffeek Ali, supervisor of preventative and regulatory services for Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's pest prevention and regulatory unit and editor of the '97 guide. "It's the most up-to-date guide of its kind and includes new pesticide registrations, formulation changes, minor use registrations and a complete guide to safety including protective clothing and first aid."

Details on the latest registered mixes and mix restrictions, application tips, expected results, storage and first aid precautions are included in the guide along with a listing of the weeds, diseases or pests controlled by each chemical.

Again this year, annual oilseed and cereal seed treatment recommendations are included in the guide. Some of the new features in the '97 *Blue Book* are: a complete guide to safety and cleaning clothing, a fungicide selector chart, chemical group numbers have been added on the same page as the chemical for quick reference, an improved chart on Group Classification by Modes of Action, new pesticide registrations and minor use changes.

"The guide includes information on new chemicals, the latest registered mixes, manufacturers application tips, expected results, storage and first aid precautions," adds Ali. "Even though it gets bigger each year, we have been able to keep the cost down. It's still only $10, plus GST, which is of great value to help farmers protect their investments by helping them choose the right way to chemically treat their crops."

Early identification of grass and broad-leaved weeds also saves time and money. Alberta Agriculture's ***Weed Seedling Guide*** ($8 plus GST) helps farmers correctly identify weed seedlings, the first step in taking appropriate action to deal with weeds.

The pocket sized guide contains information on 40 broad-leaved weeds and 10 grasses. It's organized by cotyledon (seed leaf) shape to make identification easier. The 49 illustrations and 50 full-colour photos of weed seedlings and the glossary of terms make this quick reference a publication farmers will want to have on hand.

Professionals that work with herbicides will want to add ***How Herbicides Work -Mechanisms of Action*** to their reference resources ($25 plus GST). It's well-illustrated and explains in technical detail how herbicides work.

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This Week

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

AGRI-NEWS Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development – Publishing Branch, Phone: (403) 427-2121

This new publication provides the technical aspects and information on how herbicides enter and move in plants, how they break down in the plant and soil, how they are affected by water quality and spray volume, and how the four major herbicide groups control weeds.

These three publications are available at all Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district offices or the Publications Office at 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. Credit card orders can be placed by calling 1-800-292-5697. Shipping and handling cost per order is $2 plus GST.

"Identification, advance planning and proper use are important factors in protecting crops," says Ali. "Arming yourself with the information you need is not only cost effective, it makes good sense."

Contact: Shaffeek Ali
(403)422-4909

All foods can fit

March is nutrition month in Canada and this year's theme is All Foods Can Fit. ***Canada's Food Guide for Healthy Eating*** suggests that we choose a variety of foods from each group every day.

"When choosing foods we often wonder if there are some foods that should be avoided in favour of always choosing low-fat, high-fibre, nutrient-rich foods," says Linda St. Onge, nutrition specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Actually, all foods can fit into a healthy eating pattern, we just have to eat some foods a little less often."

The four food groups that need to be included in a balanced diet are: grain products; vegetables and fruit; meat and alternatives; and, milk products.

Grain products – include breads of all kinds, cereals of all kinds, pasta, muffins, rice, crackers and other foods made from grains. Whole grains provide fibre. The nutrients we need from this group are carbohydrate, the B vitamins and iron. Some foods in the grain products group are better sources of those nutrients – but those foods with fewer of the nutrients still fit into a healthy diet.

Vegetables and fruit – include fresh, frozen or canned fruit, vegetables or their juices. The major nutrients we get are Vitamin A and Vitamin C. Usually vegetables and fruit are low in calories because they're low in fat. Some choices from this group have more Vitamin A (carrots, squash, spinach, peaches). Some offer more Vitamin C (potatoes, strawberries, cabbage, broccoli). Some, like apples, have very little of either nutrient but they still offer fibre and a low-calorie choice.

Milk products – these are the most important source of calcium in a typical North American diet. Milk also provides protein, Vitamin A and riboflavin (one of the B vitamins). This group includes fluid milk, cheese, yogurt. Other dairy products like ice cream do provide small amounts of calcium – but also have higher fat and calorie content. .

Meat and alternatives – include meats, fish, poultry, eggs, dry beans (legumes) and nuts. Protein and minerals (iron, zinc) are the major nutrients in this group. Some favourites, such as fish sticks, peanut butter, a thick juicy steak, or barbecued chicken wings do have more fat than other choices, but they still fit into the food group and into a balanced diet.

"We all love 'the other' foods – chocolate, potato chips, soft drinks, coffee – and it's important to know where they fit into Canada's Food Guide," says St. Onge. "Even though most of these foods provide no nutrients and don't belong to any one of the four food groups, it doesn't mean we should never eat them. There is no single food that's 'bad' or can prevent you from meeting your nutrient needs. It's our overall eating pattern that counts. If you're choosing a variety of foods from each group everyday, and you don't have any health problems that require a special diet, go ahead - enjoy other foods, too. All foods can fit into a healthy diet."

To receive a copy of Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating, contact St. Onge at (403)427-2412.

Contact: Linda St. Onge
(403)427-2412

Growing a sustainable message

Eliminating stereotypes and expanding knowledge are two elements of the message *Growing Alberta* has brought to the province's citizens in the last year.

The industry-driven public awareness campaign was launched during *National Soil Conservation Week* in 1996. Since then, Albertans heard messages about the economic impact of the agriculture and food industry, its leading role in the national economy and how farm management practices and the processing industry are taking care of resources – such as soil – needed to produce and process food and other agricultural products.

"As the campaign slogan says, our message has been how the industry grows more than food, how it grows Alberta," says Barb Shackel-Hardman, a campaign steering committee member who has been the acting program manager.

"Our goal is to spread agriculture's message beyond producers and processors to urban Albertans," she adds.

The message has several layers – from the basics about the size of the industry and its contribution to the economy, to a focus on resource management and developing technologies and innovations in the agriculture and food sector.

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NATIONAL SOIL
CONSERVATION
WEEK
APRIL 20 - 26, 1997

"Our research pointed out that too many urban Albertans don't realize agriculture is more than the cattle and tractors in fields beside the highway. They don't know about the food processing sector, the sophisticated technology used in today's farm operations, the extensive research that keeps Alberta's industry on the leading edge and the genuine commitment by producers to manage scarce natural resources such as soil and water," says Shackel-Hardman.

Each phase of the Growing Alberta campaign has spotlighted one aspect of the industry. First up was a general overview of the industry. The second phase addressed environmental issues: soil and water conservation, wildlife habitat, use of crop inputs such as fertilizer and water quality. Part of this phase was a 16-page color magazine titled ***Choices***.

"Our focus was on the choices made by the industry in traveling the road of sustainability," says Shackel-Hardman. ***Choices*** included features about soil conservation champions, a provincial environmental stewardship award winning cattle farmer and integrated agricultural and waterfowl use of wetlands.

"The producers whose activities were highlighted in the magazine are a snapshot, or sample, of the kind of sustainable resource use that keeps Alberta's agriculture and food industry strong," she adds.

Growing Alberta's partners – private and public organizations representing all elements of the agriculture industry from the farm gate to the consumer's kitchen table – begins publishing phase three of their message about agricultural and food processing innovations this spring.

For more information about *Growing Alberta*, contact Shackel-Hardman in Edmonton at (403)427-3587.

Contact: Barb Shackel-Hardman
(403)427-3587

Treating scours

A calf can waste away and die of scours. One of the problems in treating this condition is that scours isn't a specific disease and can be caused by bacteria, viruses, internal parasites, stress or just feeding mistakes. When the symptoms of diarrhea hit a calf it's serious, when it hits a whole group of calves, the problem can be disastrous.

"When scours hits, water electrolytes, sugars and amino acids are lost from the calf's body," says Ken Ziegler, cow-calf specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "A calf can lose 10 per cent of its body weight in just one day. Calves will usually die if they suffer a 20 per cent loss."

As well as dehydration, the calf produces excess acid and an imbalance of body salts that can poison the heart. Blood pressure and flow are reduced and kidney function is slowed.

"Colostrum, the first milk, is loaded with antibodies to help a calf fight disease," says Ziegler. "These antibodies are absorbed right into the calf's bloodstream without being digested. A calf should get a meal of colostrum within 15 minutes of birth and should consume at least two quarts within the first six hours. For occasions when a cow dies and can't furnish a newborn with colostrum, producers should have a supply of frozen colostrum from mature cows on hand."

Milk replacer for calves should be at least 20 per cent protein, 15 per cent fat and no more than 0.5 per cent fibre. Some bacteria thrive on milk, so discontinue milk or milk replacer at the first sign of serious scours and hold away for at least 24 hours after the symptoms are gone.

"Put a sick calf in a warm, dry place," says Ziegler. "If it refuses to suckle, develops cold legs or shrunken eyes, call a vet. Work from the veterinary community suggests that if the problem is widespread in a herd, a vet should take samples for laboratory analysis. For moderate cases, first replace lost body fluids, then restore body's normal acid-base balance and finally, furnish nutrients to the calf."

Most diarrhea will run its course. It's up to the producer to keep the calf alive until the symptoms disappear. Antibiotic drugs can help if the cause of the scours is bacterial. However, these drugs won't do any good against infections from viruses and can wipe out beneficial organisms in the digestive tract.

Dr. Duane Miksch, a veterinarian at the University of Kentucky, has done a considerable amount of work on this problem. He found that commercial scour remedies that contain drugs to relax the infected bowel can actually cause increased absorption of the poisonous toxins into the bloodstream. The best way to fight scours is to feed the calf a special liquid that replaces what the body is losing. Several replacements are available commercially or your can make a high quality fluid using common ingredients from your grocery store.

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Miksch recommends this scours formula:

- 1 package of fruit pectin
- 1 teaspoon Lite* salt (low sodium/high potassium salt - used for high blood pressure patients and can be found in health food stores)
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 - 10 1/2 oz can of beef consommé
- Enough warm water to make two quarts of liquid

"The response to this formula can be dramatic," says Miksch. "Within a few hours, a calf that was almost dead can be on its feet. The fruit pectin contains sugar for energy and pectin to soothe the inflamed gut. The Lite salt has electrolytes – sodium, potassium and chloride – to replace lost chemicals. Baking soda furnishes more sodium and bicarbonate to neutralize excess acid. The beef consommé, a condensed soup, offers amino acids and additional electrolytes."

"It's recommended to give this formula two or three times daily," adds Ziegler. "Have fresh water available for the calf at all times. Continue using the formula until the calf has been free of diarrhea for 24 hours. If the calf has been nursing a cow, milk the cow out just before putting the calf back on her."

Contact: Ken Ziegler
(403)845-8200

Beans gaining popularity

In spite of a reasonably good outlook for traditional cereal and oilseed crop prices, farmers are looking for alternatives. With wheat and other traditional crops not living up to expectations coupled with freight rate increases, returns on traditional crops have been reduced.

"One of the crops grabbing considerable attention lately is dry beans," says Beata Lees, special crops specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Dry bean prices have been high, although volatile. Part of the continued interest in dry bean can be credited to the significant improvement in varieties and expansion of processing plants that has followed this upward trend."

The biggest plus for beans in the future is the ability to grow them with conventional equipment. Until recently, special wide-row planters and undercutters were required. The more upright varieties that set their pods higher on the plant are making beans look more attractive to the producer.

"Last summer, a field experiment was conducted in Vauxhall using AC Skipper, one of the new upright navy bean varieties, in narrow eight inch and 16 inch rows" says Lees. "Sclerotinia was minimized by the upright nature that allowed for good air flow and bean seed quality was improved by direct combining. Field operations went quickly and post harvest soil erosion was reduced. Leaving the short stems and root system intact was good for the soil."

There were some disadvantages noted. Along with seed costs increase, producers must take the time and precautions to ensure that weed and irrigation management are near perfect. Water not applied at the right time results in short plants with pods too close to the ground.

"For the best results, fields must be rolled at seeding time to ease harvest," says Lees. "Yields were excellent in 1996. The best yield was rolled, straight cut and seeded on 16 inch rows. Yield in the test plot was over 2600 pounds per acre. The field surrounding the test plot was planted in traditional 22 inch rows, undercut and yielded close to 3000 pounds."

The next step will be to determine optimum seeding rates on narrow rows for the best, economic yields.

If considering dry bean as an alternate crop, producers should take a little time getting additional information from contracting company representatives or one of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development special crops specialists.

Contact: Beata Lees
(403)381-5237

Strategies to reduce Take-all

Take-all is a fungal disease of wheat that thrives in cool, moist soils. In 1996, it was widespread in central Alberta due to the major role weather plays in its appearance and spread.

"Take-all is a severe root rot that causes roots and crowns to turn dark brown to shiny black," says Murray Hartman, crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The fungus overwinters on residues of cereals and grasses and spreads from plant to plant through root contact. Severely affected plants are stunted, produce few tillers and have white heads that die prematurely."

Take-all often occurs in patches but, in light infestations, single plants may be affected much like common root rot. Diseased patches tend to brown before the rest of the crop and sometimes lodge more. Sever infestations can cause yield losses of 30 per cent. Last year, central Alberta experienced approximately five to 10 per cent yield losses due to Take-all.

"Take-all affects a wide variety of cereals and grasses including wheat, barley, rye, brome grass and quack grass," says Hartman. "The disease usually increases in severity as wheat is grown in successive years. Crop rotation is an effective control but the break crop must be free of volunteer cereals, quack grass and brome. Oats are not susceptible to take-all. Wheat-barley-wheat is not a rotation break for Take-all!"

Different varieties of wheat are more susceptible to take-all. CPS wheats, such as Oslo, are more susceptible than CWRS wheats, such as Roblin. Research from other parts of the world

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has found that additional fertilizer, nitrogen, potassium, phosphorus, copper and manganese, can reduce losses from Take-all. More neutral to alkaline soils also increase Take-all severity.

In a two-year, multi-site study in central Alberta, nutrient management had minimal effect on the occurrence of Take-all in wheat. Nitrogen marginally reduced it but did increase yield. Potash slightly reduced the number of white heads but didn't reduce root damage nor increase yield. Phosphorus, manganese and copper had no effect on Take-all levels. However, a balanced fertility program with adequate fertilizer rates will help lower losses to Take-all.

"Until recently, there were no fungicides available for Take-all," adds Hartman. "Baytan (triadimenol) has recently be registered as a seed treatment with Take-all suppression at higher rates. In the central Alberta study, triadimenol reduced Take-all levels but reduced grain yields in some cases. Other researchers have reported reduced crop emergence with Baytan."

Baytan has shown a tendency to reduce the length of coleoptiles and the sub-crown internode. This reduces the ability for crops to emerge and may be an important side effect for semi-dwarf cereals that tend to have shorter coleoptiles. Producers should seed shallow if planning to use Baytan.

Contact: Murray Hartman
(403)227-6565

Agri-News Briefs

Minimizing alternaria in canola

There are no fungicides presently registered for control of alternaria, although progress is being made. Until registered alternaria fungicides or resistance is bred into canola, there are a few ways to minimize the disease: plant Argentine where possible for its leaf resistance to alternaria; plant as early as possible to minimize exposure to this late disease; make sure that sulphur is not deficient within the entire field and is available to the plants when seeded; make sure nitrogen and sulphur are in balance; use clean seed; and, follow proper rotations. Research continues, so watch for future developments in the area of fungicides that will protect canola against alternaria. For further information, contact Jay Byer, associate oil seed specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, at (403)782-4641.

Bio-essential minerals

Twenty five elements are recognized as essential components of plants, animals and man. Some minerals are required in fairly large amounts, such as calcium and magnesium, others are only required in 'trace' amounts. To explain the workings and necessity of minerals, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development has published an agri-fax factsheet (Agdex #531-3) that identifies essential minerals and gives brief descriptions of the role these minerals play in growth functions, where known, in plants, animals and man. Deficient or adequate levels are provided for plant growth only. Copies of *Minerals for Plants, Animals and Man* can be obtained from the Publishing Branch, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6 or at district agriculture offices.

Herbicide residue

Some herbicides break down quickly and aren't even a problem to the most sensitive crops seeded immediately after herbicide application. Other persistent herbicides can injure susceptible crops for up to four years after use. Herbicides range from persistent to short-lived and it's important for farmers to closely follow directions on herbicide labels and plan crop rotations carefully to avoid yield loss. Rainfall, soil pH and the organic matter content in soil all contribute to herbicide breakdown and availability to crops. Research is currently being done at the Lethbridge Research Centre, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, that should help make safe cropping rotation choices possible. Producers need to be aware of potential herbicide residue concerns. Following herbicide label directions and referring to the ***Crop Protection With Chemicals*** guide (*Blue Book*) will help producers plan crop rotations accordingly. For further information and current research updates, contact Shaffeek Ali, weed control specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, at (403)422-4909, Edmonton.

Agri-food processing workshop

To help agri-food processing initiatives in the Peace region get up and running, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and the Northern Alberta Development Council have organized the 1997 Agri-food Processing Workshop. The workshop is on Thursday, April 17 at the Travellers Hotel in Peace River. Tom Droog, Alberta's 'Mr. Spitz' and president of Alberta Sunflower Seeds starts the workshop off with a presentation of how his company was built from an idea and its present industry status. A discussion of the many opportunities for value-added processing and presentations by several successful Albertans provide information on building or expanding agri-food business. Presenters include: Shirley Alton, Prairie Orchards; Dan Patten, Bar Diamond "P" Buffalo Ranches; Debbie Hellbach, Hellbach Consulting; Larry Groner, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; Duane Watrin, Western Economic Diversification Canada; and Deb Hagman, Hog Wild Specialties. Conference cost is $50. Registration is requested by April 4, 1997. To register or for further information, call (403)624-6274 in Peace River. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE line.

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CANADIANA

APR 23 1997

AGRI-NEWS

March 31, 1997

New tax management strategies for farmers

It's that time of year again – tax time. It's the time when farmers are looking for tips to help save tax dollars. No one wants to pay more taxes than they should. A sound tax management strategy can help farmers avoid traps and maximize tax saving opportunities.

"Farm business managers have many important factors to consider in the running of their operations," says Merle Good, provincial tax specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "One of the significant factors any farm business manager must consider is the effect taxation will have on the operation of the farm business."

To help farmers with these concerns, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD) has produced a new ***Tax Management Strategies for Farmers***. This 75-page publication provides tax planning strategies to help farmers save or defer tax in their farming operations. Tax strategies and rules that directly affect the agricultural sector are covered.

"The bottom line means more than just zero on the tax form," says Good. "By managing tax strategies, farmers can maximize their income after tax, not just minimize their tax obligation."

The new publication, by authors Merle Good and Dean Gallimore CA, is a joint effort between the Farm Business Management Branch of AAFRD and KPMG. It covers a wide range of taxation issues, is current up to the last federal budget and contains a review of general topic areas followed by a check-list of *Tips and Traps*. The publication is a quick reference of a large number of important agricultural tax issues and lists tax strategies and potential concerns.

"The publication was designed primarily to assist accounting professionals and farm business managers dealing with agricultural taxation issues. Other professionals, financial planners and agricultural consultants will find the information valuable as well," adds Good.

Topics covered include: capital cost allowance; inventory; home offices; machinery; government grants and assistance; partnerships; corporations; farm losses; farm wages; motor vehicles; capital gains exemption; rollovers; and, setting up a new farm site.

Tax Management Strategies for Farmers is available at all district offices of AAFRD or can be ordered by contacting the Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6, or calling toll-free, 1-800-292-5697, in Edmonton dial 427-0391.

Cost of the publication is $10 (plus GST), please add $2.14 for shipping and handling. Payment can be made by cheque or money order (to the Provincial Treasurer) or by VISA or MasterCard.

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

The publication can also be found in electronic format on the AAFRD Internet homepage. The address is: **www.agric.gov.ab.ca/economic/taxation/index.html**.

Contact: *Merle Good at (403)556-4237*
Douglas Duff at (403)556-4248 or
e-mail: **agtaxlink@agric.gov.ab.ca**

Fish farming in Alberta

It's called aquaculture. There are already 80 licenced fish farm operations in Alberta and over 90 per cent of these are in rural Alberta. In 1995, over 300,000 pounds of table fish were produced in the province and 2.5 million fish reared mainly for stocking ponds and lakes.

International fisheries are under a lot pressure as they try to meet ever increasing demand for seafood and fish. There are 17 major fisheries in the world, four of those are classified as commercially depleted and nine others are in serious decline. The world's wild stocks of fish are in trouble and the aquaculture industry is ideally positioned to step in and supply a large portion of the growing demand.

By the year 2000, it is estimated that global demand for fish and seafood will reach 120 million tonnes, a 20 per cent growth in the next four years. The aquaculture industry, while creating jobs and diversifying industry in the province, is environmentally friendly and can be a beneficial partner with traditional wild fishery operations.

"Commercial fishing has been practised in Alberta for generations, but fish farming is a young industry," says Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's (AAFRD) aquaculture manager, Duncan Lloyd. "The first commercial aquaculture operation started in the mid-1960s. Currently seven species of fish are being domestically reared in Alberta: rainbow trout, brook trout, brown trout, arctic char, koi, and tilapia, and there is one producer in the province rearing gold fish as feeder fish for pet stores."

In 1988, a market potential of trout farming in Alberta study was commissioned by federal and provincial governments. The study showed there is growth potential for this industry and that the province is not taking advantage of fish farming opportunities.

Alberta imports approximately $50 million annually in aquatic animals. There is an opportunity to replace fish imports with Alberta produced fingerlings and fresh table fish.

Another avenue the fish industry can pursue is in the value-added area – paté and smoked, canned, butterflied or portion controlled products. There is very little to no work being done in this area and it lends itself to the industry growth Alberta is striving for.

"This industry is just beginning to generate enthusiasm," says Lloyd. "That enthusiasm can make it seem like the wheels are moving too slowly. However, environmental risks will not be tolerated. Every precaution to protect wild stocks is being taken. Industry standards, licencing and the administration of this industry are developing to ensure the sustainable operation of aquaculture."

"The Alternative Livestock Products Team of AAFRD plays an important support role for the industry," says Doug Bienert, market researcher with AAFRD. "Research and development in this relatively new industry is extremely important. Strategies for the next few years will focus on developing new market opportunities, both domestic and export, and identifying processing needs and regulatory constraints."

AAFRD assumes the full responsibility of fish farm licencing on April 1, 1997. Licencing procedures will be governed by the regulations and Fisheries Act under Alberta Environmental Protection. The regulations govern the species that can be raised and the operating conditions attached to a licence.

"Triploid grass carp have been identified through eight years of research trials as having strong potential in aquatic weed management," adds Lloyd. "On April 1, 1997, a five year, pre-commercial aquatic weed management period commences. This phase will build confidence for the environmental safety and benefits of grass carp use."

During the pre-commercial period, using the fish as a new food commodity of fresh grass carp for the Asian food market will also be explored.

Contact: *Duncan Lloyd*
(403)381-5539

Additional Fish Facts

- Fish production costs are approximately $1.60 - $2 per pound, in Alberta
- There are 80 fish farming operations in Alberta and currently seven species being reared
- Canadians are eating more fish. Average consumption per capita has increased from 6.9 kg per person in 1990 to 8.3 kg per person in 1995. This trend is due mainly to an increased demand for low-fat sources of protein and the diet preferences of a growing Asian population
- AAFRD staff assist in marketing, veterinary services, extension and fish health testing, and are responsible for production, processing and marketing research and technology transfer
- Worldwide water pollution problems will not improve quickly, natural fish stocks will not replenish quickly and consumers will not decrease demand for fish and seafood
- Although Canada has more coastline than any other country, it ranks 27th in the world in aquaculture production, less than 0.3 per cent of world production
- Canada dropped from second to fifth in world fish exports, out-produced by both Norway and Chile

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- The demand for tilapia, a white fleshed fish in the cichlid family, has grown considerably in the past two years
- 98 per cent of Alberta growers rear rainbow trout. It is the easiest growing member of the trout family and is very good eating

NATIONAL SOIL
CONSERVATION
WEEK
APRIL 20 - 26, 1997

FARA instigates 'quiet revolution'

There's a quiet revolution in tillage practices occurring in the Fairview area as producers see the benefits of conservation practices demonstrated by the Fairview Applied Research Association (FARA).

Many of the association's members now direct seed all or most of their fields. "FARA is putting soil conservation in the minds of the community," says FARA president Neil Boyd. The change in practices, and mind sets, is one of the reasons FARA was named the **1997 ACTS Soil Conservation Group Award** winner.

Boyd says the organization has four objectives: to help producers try new conservation techniques, to provide its members with up-to-date information, to transfer knowledge from producer to producer and to co-ordinate area research trials with the federal research station in Beaverlodge, the Canola Council of Canada and Farming for the Future.

As well, Boyd notes, FARA works closely with the MD of Fairview agricultural service board to cover its soil conservation mandate and co-operates with a local forage association.

When it started in 1991, one of FARA's first projects was to investigate zero-till farming's potential. Last year its projects included pea inoculant trials, stubble height seeding comparisons, anhydrous rates applied while direct seeding canola and direct seeding canola with four different openers.

Boyd says the ideas for FARA's work come from brainstorming meetings where members bring up concerns, or problems they'd like to try to solve. One of their continuing projects experiments with seeding into sod. A future project under consideration will compare yield and protein content of wheat in a rotation following different pea inoculants.

Helping keep the organization's activities and information flowing is manager Paul Jungnitsch. His job includes travelling around western Canada as well as looking globally for leading edge material and technology to share. He's produced, through many hours of welding, a modified air drill for farmers wanting to try direct seeding

Jungnitsch also does direct farmer-to-farmer information transfer. He video tapes producer success stories and then shares the video information – sometimes the same day – with farmers who are looking for a solution to the same sort of problem. These videos, as well as slides, are shared at FARA's fall meeting.

FARA's annual summer tour is an opportunity for more than FARA members to see results. "Seeing is believing," says Boyd. "Having seen and heard the success stories, producers take the information back to the coffee shops and talk about them."

Boyd and Jungnitsch were in Red Deer to accept the award. Boyd describes the recognition as putting new excitement into FARA. "It freshens things up," he says.

The annual ACTS conservation awards are sponsored by the Alberta Conservation Tillage Society (ACTS), Advisor Graphics, Toronto Dominion Bank, Monsanto Canada and the Canada/Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture Agreement (CAESA).

Contact: *Neil Boyd* *(403)835-4474*
Paul Jungnitsch *(403)835-2291*

Fast Fact

- Neil Boyd has been recognized individually for his conservation efforts. In 1994, he and his family were the recipients of ACTS Peace region conservation farm family award. He was also recognized with a forage achievement award at the Alberta Beef Congress in 1996.

Save time with less tillage

Many producers are going into the 1997 seeding season wondering how to get their seeding done on time. With rutted fields, crop still in the fields, and little or no fall work done, time will be a precious commodity for most producers.

"Some producers are considering reduced tillage or direct seeding as a way to save time," says Peter Gamache, Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative (ARTI) program manager. "There are tips for getting the crop in this spring using reduced tillage. If it's your first crack at reduced tillage or direct seeding, consider some of the following questions."

Is direct seeding a viable option? Direct seeding into standing stubble may be a viable option to reduce the time you spend putting your crop in. However, factors including residue management, weed control, fertility and equipment need to be considered before going ahead.

Cont'd on page 4

Can I direct seed if I've never done it before and don't have a direct seeding drill? It's possible to direct seed with some conventional drills and air seeders. Residue clearance, fertilizer placement and openers types are important considerations. One of the keys is residue management. If you cut stubble fairly low, spread chaff and chopped and spread straw last fall, chances of success are much greater. Don't forget, custom direct seeding may be an option.

What if I didn't spread my chaff and straw last fall? Heavy chaff rows are nearly impossible to spread and may cause considerable problems when direct seeding. The soil is usually colder under the chaff, seeding through the chaff is difficult, and chaff rows can cause weed, disease and fertility problems.

If chaff is not a big problem but straw is, try spreading residue with harrows. Heavy harrows are quite effective. If at all possible harrow on a hot, dry day to maximize straw breakup and spreading. If you have excessive amounts of straw you may have to use tillage to manage it. Baling may be another option to consider. For more information, see the *Residue Management for Successful Direct Seeding* factsheet - Agdex #570-4.

Can I direct seed if my fields are rutted? Rutting may not mean abandoning direct seeding. If rutting is concentrated in low or poorly drained areas, producers could consider using tandem discs, blades or other tillage equipment to fill in the ruts without working the entire field.

What if I still have crop in the field? If you have unswathed or swathed crop from last fall, it will give you a chance to properly manage the residue. Chaff and straw should be spread the width of the swather or header and as evenly as possible. A good chaff spreader and straw chopper are important. If the crop isn't worth taking off, a forage harvester may be used to chop and blow the residue on the field.

What about soil temperatures? Soil temperatures are usually a bit cooler under direct seeding conditions; however, this does not usually result in reduced yields. In spring, soil is usually warm and moist near the surface, shallow seeding of cereals and oilseeds can enhance crop emergence. Some soil disturbance at seeding may help warm up soils. Most crops will germinate at temperatures as low as three to five degrees C. Polish canola starts to germinate at five degrees C. For more information, see the *Soil Temperature and Direct Seeding* factsheet - Agdex #590-2.

Will working the soil once before seeding help? If planning to till once to control weeds or dry the soil and then seed, you may have more problems than if you don't cultivate. It's usually easier to direct seed into standing, anchored stubble than stubble that has been worked once. If you start tilling you may find that several tillage passes may be required prior to seeding. Banding fertilizer into standing stubble with narrow openers usually leaves most of the stubble anchored and facilitates direct seeding.

Is pre-seeding burnoff really that important? Don't be tempted to skip pre-seeding herbicide application. In direct seeding it's very important. Controlling weeds, especially winter annuals, before they get ahead of the crop is critical. If you haven't used any tillage to kill weeds, one half litre per acre of Roundup is registered for annual weeds, with one litre per acre needed for perennials. Check with your Monsanto representative or crop specialist for more details on weed control. For more information, see the *Pre-seeding Weed Control with Herbicides* factsheet - Agdex #519-3.

What if I need to use soil incorporated herbicides like Avadex BW or Fortress? Avadex BW and Fortress have label recommendations for minimum-till and direct seeding. Apply Avadex or Fortress early. In most cases, a harrowing or high disturbance pass at seeding is needed to incorporate the granules. Contact your Monsanto representative or crop specialist for more details. Registration for surface applied granular Treflan and Edge is pending. Check with your DowElanco representative.

What about fertilizer? Fertilizer placement is important in direct seeding. Most conventional drills can only apply fertilizer with the seed and have limited fertilizer capacity. If you have fine-textured soils (clays and clay loams) with good moisture conditions at seeding you can apply high levels of nitrogen and phosphorus with the seed. If conditions are dry and you have coarser textured soils you may have to look at alternatives such as banding fertilizer before seeding, preferably with narrow knives. Broadcasting nitrogen is another alternative with 34-0-0 the preferred source of nitrogen. Canola and peas are more sensitive to seedrow applied fertilizer than cereals. If possible, phosphorus should be applied with the seed. High rates of fertilizer can usually be safely applied with air seeders using shovels and a wide seed spread.

"Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development has a set of Direct Seeding factsheets that can help," says Gamache. "They're available from regional conservation coordinators who can also help assess individual situations. Alberta Agriculture crop specialist and reps from some of the ARTI partners - Monsanto, Westco, Agrium, ACTS, DowElanco and UFA can also help."

Factsheets can be picked up at all district offices or at the Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6.

Contact: *Peter Gamache*
(403)427-3361

Selecting bulls for genetic quality

Most cattlemen agree that selecting bulls is one of the most challenging yet most rewarding tasks in a cow-calf operation. Many factors in raising cattle are not controllable, the weather and the market, for example. Producers do have control, however, over the genetic quality of their cattle.

"After three generations of bulls pass through a breeding program, they leave 87.5 per cent of the genetic influence in the females of the herd," says Brian Koberstein, beef specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Bull selection is important to the future competitiveness of a cow herd. When selecting a bull, be sure to consider industry trends, know your breeding program goals and evaluate individual bulls based on what they offer your herd."

Buying a bull can be a difficult and often intimidating task. Bulls should be evaluated solely on their physical and genetic merit. To do this, producers must determine how a bull ranks structurally, what 'numbers' are important and reliable, how the bull was managed and fed, and whether this particular bull will take a herd in the direction you want it to go.

"Industry trends can really play havoc with breeding plans if you subscribe to the 'flavour of the month' kind of bull choices," says Koberstein. "Cattlemen are in the business of producing beef. Value to the customer is the important factor that producers need to keep in mind. Raising the value means either lowering the price or raising the quality or both. Raising and managing cattle that offer meat quality in a cost effective manner is the most important and obvious industry trend.

Breeding program goals in any operation need to be specific and built around industry trends and factors specific to an operation. When it comes to evaluating individual bulls, take a look at them in their environment - mother cows, feed rations and overall herd quality and management.

"Try to evaluate bulls for their genetic merit not the feed they've consumed," adds Koberstein. "Bulls raised on a high 'pamper factor' may not be what's needed in a working, cost effective environment. The only message a bull sends a herd is genetic. The way he was fed will have no impact providing he's sound, healthy and able to get the job done."

Bull selection is crucial to a herd. Unfortunately, evaluating one bull against another raised in different environments can be extremely difficult but worth the time and effort. Be critical and take the time to choose the bull that will benefit your herd.

Contact: Brian Koberstein
(403)361-1240

Goats improving rangeland

An international contingent from Zacatecas, Mexico, visited the Eastern Irrigation District in January. The group of academics and cattle industry leaders were particularly interested in the southeastern area of the province because of its arid and semi-arid climate, similar to much of Mexico.

As well as their interest in viewing Alberta's world-class genetics research and embryo transplant technology for cattle, the Mexican delegation were particularly interested in Boer goats.

Boer goats will produce meat under arid and semi-arid rangeland conditions and that's particularly important to Mexico where water availability limits agricultural production on over 50 per cent of its land area.

Over 63 per cent of Mexico's 197 million hectares is pasture land used for livestock. Mexico is currently the 11th largest producer of goats in the world and is still not self-sufficient in goat meat.

Population growth is one of the most compelling reasons Mexican governments have made agriculture their highest priority at this time. The governments there are developing new programs to enhance meat goat productivity in that country.

Dr. Sergio Mendes de Lara, DVM, a goat specialist from the University of Zacatecas, commented that over 60 per cent of Mexico's rangeland productivity suffers from brush invasion. Cattle carrying capacity is reduced considerably due to the increase in woody plants that are not palatable to cattle.

"Some work on goat forage habits and their ability to decrease and control the spread of shrubs and other coarse vegetation, has been done in Alberta," says Wray Whitmore, sheep specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "When shrub, brush and other less desirable plants compete with grasses for water, nutrients and sunlight, forage production for cattle is reduced. Goats work on this brush vegetation and help clean it out which results in greater pasture land productivity."

"Regaining rangeland productivity from brush invasion is one of the ecological benefits of grazing goats," says Brian Payne, president of the Canadian Boer Goat Association. "When cattle and goats are grazed in complementary fashion, cattle pastures have been seen to improve. Additional red meat production is achieved through more efficient use of biomass. Meat goats can provide real opportunity for western Canadians as we build the industry on a firm scientific agronomic base."

Contact: Wray Whitmore (403)427-4571
Brian Payne (403)793-2505

Provincial 4-H Congress

After a long, cold winter, 4-H members and leaders are starting to set their sites on summer activities. It's not too early to start planning for the **Provincial 4-H Congress** events and competitions. The Congress bring 4-Hers together to compare and enhance their project skills and indulge in some healthy, educational competition with other members.

"This year the Provincial 4-H Congress is combining several events in one three-day extravaganza," says Linda Rasmuson, 4-H home economics assistant with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "From July 30 to August 1, 1997, at the Olds College, 4-Hers can participate in the 3rd Annual Provincial 4-H Horse Classic; the Livestock Roundup; and, a new feature, the Project Fair."

The **Provincial 4-H Horse Classic** offers a team horse bowl contest, a horse hippology contest, demonstration contests, marketing contests, and a number of clinics. Individuals compete in three age categories (as of Jan.1, 1997), junior: 9 to 11; intermediate: 12 to 15; senior: 16 to 21, with prizes awarded for individuals and teams in all age categories. The top four senior members, based on individual points, will be invited to go on to the National Western 4-H Horse Classic, Denver, Colorado in January 1998.

"Up to 200 4-H Horse project members can be accepted for this event," says Rasmuson. "We encourage clubs to enter as a club. More information on the Horse Classic and official program booklets are available from provincial clubs and the provincial 4-H office."

Team Demonstrations, project bowls, meat judging, livestock evaluation, animal husbandry knowledge competitions, identification station contests, individual demonstrations and marketing contests round out the **Livestock Roundup** event.

"The Livestock Roundup highlights livestock projects focusing on the meat and livestock industries," says Rasmuson. "This event is of special interest to 4-H members involved in sheep, swine, llama, rhea, poultry, goat, dairy and beef."

Livestock is provided for the judging and animal husbandry competitions and members are not to bring any project animals.

"**Project Fair** is a new, exciting program planned as part of the Congress this year," says Rasmuson. "It's open to any 4-H member. Mini-sessions in crafts, clothing, entrepreneur, foods, small engines, outdoorsman, welding and woodworking will highlight the program."

4-H members from across the province will compete in demonstrations and knowledge of project material. Members can model something they have created or a garment from Lammle's Western Wear during the fashion show. All members are invited to bring their project items for the provincial bench show.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for 200 4-H members and leaders to share and learn together," adds Rasmuson. "The three days should be quite a display of talents. We are very pleased that United Farmers of Alberta and Lammle's Western Wear have shown their support by being major sponsors of the Provincial Congress."

Registration applications should be received at the provincial 4-H office for the Provincial Horse Classic, Livestock Roundup or the Project Fair by June 1, 1997. Program fee is $40 ($50 for late fee) for members and $20 for leaders and parents ($30 for late fee).

Members are responsible for their own room, board and travel costs. Camping and Olds College packages are available. 4-H Club leaders have copies of the official program, application forms and additional information on accommodation.

Contact: *Linda Rasmuson* *Henry Wiegman*
(403)422-4H4H *(403)427-4532*

Agri-News Briefs

Bison meat and live auction

Canada's first-ever bison carcass competition is slated as one of the highlights at the 3rd annual Wild Rose Classic Bison Show and Sale, April 2 and 3, 1997, indoors at the Regional Exhibition in Camrose, Alberta. This unique feature gives the general public a rare opportunity to purchase fresh, high quality, award-winning bison meat. Bidders can have the carcasses cut and wrapped according to their personal specifications and tastes by a contracted federally-inspected meat processor. Following the carcass auction, the Wild Rose Bison Sale offers 80 head in four categories: 1995 and 1996 males, and 1995 and 1996 females. The sale features top animals from 30 leading bison herds spaning the four western provinces. A two-day trade fair of bison products, services and equipment showcase the newest and best in the buffalo business and provide an industry education aspect to the event. There is no admission fee and the food concession booth will feature bison meat on a bun. For further information, contact Norm Moore (403)388-3759, Alder Flats, or Dan Plumb (403)656-2198, Smoky Lake.

Home economics annual conference

The 1997 annual conference of the Alberta Home Economics Association (AHEA) is scheduled for April 25 and 26 in Red Deer, Alberta. During the two days, sessions include: practical uses of the Internet at home; proactive people skills; and, a keynote address on keeping promises by David Adie, teacher, humorist and lecturer. A food issues panel will look at consumer concerns about food safety. Canadians have access to one of the safest food supplies in the world, yet the microbial safety of food is often seen as in jeopardy. Some of the most commonly asked questions and the current and accurate answers will be discussed. The AHEA Awards Reception, taking place on Friday evening, April 25, gives attendees the chance to socialize, network and enjoy "The Taste of Alberta". The AHEA Annual Meeting is scheduled for 11:05 a.m., Saturday, April 26. Registration is requested before April 11, 1997. For more information, contact Marilyn Olajos (403)347-8494, Red Deer, or Leona Staples (403)227-6020, Innisfail.

Understanding water quality

A Primer on Water Quality: Agricultural Impacts and Pollutant Pathways is a new report compiled by the conservation and development branch of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. The primary purpose of the report is to present information on the impacts of agriculture on water quality from a North American perspective. It presents specific examples of production practices from other regions of North America that have affected surface or ground water quality. Background information on agricultural contaminants and how they are transported from agroecosystems to surface and ground water is included. The report also outlines contaminant processes in lakes and rivers and describes the impacts of agricultural pollutants on aquatic systems. Alberta's agricultural industries produce and market products worldwide based on the concept of quality food produced in a clean environment. The key to protecting natural resources is having the necessary information to enable the use of wise management practices. For further information, or to request a copy of the report, contact Sandra Cooke, water quality biologist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, (403)427-3397, Edmonton.

Special crops directory - Internet address correction

The *Special Crops Directory* is available on-line. The address previously given was incorrect. To access the electronic version of the directory go to:

http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/crops/special/directory/index.html

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Breed heifers early

With calving now almost complete, producers are looking forward to breeding season. The fertility of heifers and the future cow herd are of particular importance.

"Breeding heifers is handled differently than breeding the main herd," says Terry Holmgren, cow/calf beef specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "As a general rule, start breeding heifers about three weeks, one oestrus cycle, prior to breeding the main herd. Fertile heifers should be ready to breed by this time. First-calf heifers often require a bit more time after calving before rebreeding, so this will keep them in step with the rest of the herd after their first calf. Having heifer calves born earlier will also provide a more even calf crop for sale."

Limit the breeding season for heifers to 42 days. The most fertile heifers will breed young and within a couple of cycles. This fertility will follow the cow through it's lifetime performance. One of the best ways to improve and maintain high reproductive performance in a herd is demanding high heifer fertility over time.

"If heifers are fertile, they should be ready to breed by about 14 months of age," says Holmgren. "However, they should have had at least two cycles prior to breeding or pregnancy rate will be affected. Target the feeding program so that heifers will weigh about 65 per cent of their mature weight by the beginning of the breeding season. Lighter calves often start cycling later and are less fertile than heifers that have achieved this target weight."

Overfeeding growing heifer calves affects future performance. It may have an effect on their fertility, but evidence shows that more often the problem is that fat deposited during udder development affects future milk production. If heifer calves are growing well, it may be advisable to avoid creep feeding for this reason. Over the winter, target heifers at about 1.25 to 1.5 pounds gain per day.

"Birth weight is about 40 per cent heritable, so bulls should be selected for calving ease. The bulls chosen should have been born unassisted and their birth weight should have been at least 10 pounds lighter than herd average," adds Holmgren. "Avoid large boned bulls with large heads, shoulders or thick muscling."

Contact: *Terry Holmgren*
(403)826-3388

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

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Erosion models yield information

Two fields are nearly identical – the same slope, the same cropping practice and the same rain storm falls on them. But, the soils are different and water erosion on one field is nearly five times higher than on the other.

Currently, researchers from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's conservation and development branch are measuring water erosion on a variety of soil types. "Our goal is to identify the soils that are particularly vulnerable to water erosion, then be able to help producers select management practices that will reduce the erosion," says Ralph Wright, soil scientist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

The research is being done in both farmer's fields and the laboratory. The on-farm experiments involve forming a small, sloping channel then running water through the channel, or rill, at various flow rates. Researchers measure the rill shape and collect sediment samples to determine soil loss from the water flow in the different soil types. In the lab, soils collected from the fields are subjected to an artificial rainstorm. Soil loss from the applied rain is also measured.

"Both experiments have allowed us to rank the erodibility of the various soil types found across Alberta. So far, the range from the 13 sites we've used is more than 500 per cent. That value is likely to increase as we test more soils," says Wright.

While it may seem obvious that some soils are more erodible than others, and that the most erodible soils should be tilled less and have more residue left on them, the research will answer specific questions. How much residue should be left on the field? Should straw be chopped or baled? Is there a difference between fall and spring tillage? Is there a difference in soil loss between conventional fallow and chemical fallow?

"Our research is gathering real numbers that can be a guide to producers, so they can select the management practices that make sense for their operation and the same time reduce water erosion of their soil," says Wright.

Contact: Ralph Wright *(403)427-3781*
Douwe Vanderwel *(403)427-3629*

Soil Quotable:

"Today's soil is tomorrow's bread and butter."

Grant McEwan, historian, author, conservationist and former Alberta Lt.-Gov.

Fast Facts:

- Water erosion of soil occurs when runoff from rain fall or snow melt moves over the soil surface and takes part of the top soil with the water flow. Top soil is the most productive layer of the soil.
- An erodible soil with good infiltration properties is less prone to erosion than a less erodible soil with poor water infiltration. How well water seeps into the soil is very important to controlling runoff.
- Erodible soils can be farmed. However, they need to be appropriately managed through crop selection, residue management and reduced tillage.

Trees are a plus in soil conservation

Removing trees from land can cause water and wind erosion of soil, affect watertables and wildlife, change landscape aesthetics and have economic consequences.

"Trees are a part of the agricultural conservation picture," says soil and water conservation engineer Douwe Vanderwel of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's conservation and development branch.

Vanderwel has been involved in issues related to agroforestry, more particularly the relationship between conservation and logging on private land. He co-authored a booklet on the subject that explains the long-term effects of logging.

"The effects of logging have come to the forefront with changing technology in the pulp and paper industry," he says. "Poplar trees are now considered a valuable fibre source. People that had land with poplar bush suddenly saw their land value triple."

Because their trees had a cash value, land owners began to explore their options. "There are basically three – managing the woodlot, developing the land for traditional agricultural production and simply clearing the timber," says Vanderwel. "Managing the woodlot is certainly the most desirable option."

Initial leadership in helping land owners choose an option and understand the consequences of their decision came from provincial and federal government departments. Since its formation, the Woodlot Association of Alberta (WAA) has assumed a larger role in promoting sustainable development of private woodlots in the province.

"Our whole purpose is to promote sustainable forestry," says Gordon Kerr, WAA president. "Through workshops, including a major policy conference last fall, the association is providing information about selective harvesting, the practical economics of forest farming and the non-market value of trees."

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There's been considerable interest in the topic. The association's membership grew from 28 members two years ago to a current total of nearly 200. Members come from as far south as Waterton and as far north as High Level and from the province's western to eastern borders.

"Whatever a landowner decides to do, harvesting trees is a long-term decision with long-term consequences especially for the soil," says Vanderwel. "Fortunately, there's information and people who can help farmers and other land owners to make the decision that works for their operation."

The booklet *Conservation and Logging on Private Land in Alberta* is available from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district offices, the department's central publication office in Edmonton and Alberta Land and Forest Services offices. Also available is a short pamphlet, *Logging Private Land in Alberta*, that explains timber harvesting options.

For more information about the Woodlot Association of Alberta and its activities, call the association's office toll-free at 1-800-871-5670, or in the Edmonton area at 424-0286.

Contact: Douwe Vanderwel (403)427-3629
Gordon Kerr (403)434-0512

Soil Quotable:

"The Nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased, and not impaired in value."

Teddy Roosevelt, U.S. President, 1910

Fast Facts:

- Treed areas provide a variety of benefits for agriculture and the environment. These include:
  - Watershed protection by reducing runoff and improved water quality.
  - Shade, shelter and food for livestock.
  - As a shelterbelt they reduce wind velocity thus protecting crops, and reducing soil moisture loss and wind erosion.
  - Oxygen cycling by taking in carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen.
  - Maintenance of regional groundwater balance by trapping snow.
  - Biological diversity is part of a varied and attractive landscape.

  Carbon sequestration.
- Woodlot management is carefully planned, periodic timber harvesting. It allows landowners the economic benefits of selling timber, without eliminating the environmental and agricultural benefits of trees.

Snow loads on farm buildings

Last winter was a great test for farm buildings in most areas of Alberta. Large amounts of snow accumulated early in the season and put a fair amount of stress on structures.

"When planning this spring's farm building project, think about all the snow that fell last winter," says Robert Borg, regional engineer with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Be sure to order the proper trusses, install them correctly and maintain them with a good environment inside the barn."

Check your area's record of total snow, ice and rain, to get a general idea of the strength needed for a structure. Roof trusses are designed to hold the roof + snow load + rain load and the weight of the trusses and ceiling.

"The amount of snow making up the roof snow load is equal to the ground snow load multiplied by modification factors. Some of the snow may slide off the roof or, in other cases, drift on to the roof."

Snow load modification factors are:

- basic factor 80 per cent of ground snow load is expected to stay on the roof;
- factor for exposed or sheltered locations. If the wind can blow snow off the roof from any direction, a further 75 per cent factor is applied. This only applies if you are far enough from a shelterbelt or tall building (for example: a 16' high shop needs to be 200' away from a 36' high shelterbelt - any closer and the reduction factor does not apply);
- if the roof is steep and/or slippery (metal instead of asphalt shingles) you can reduce the roof load to allow for snow sliding off the roof;
- snow accumulation factors. The main accumulation factor is the unbalanced load created by snow blowing over the peak and drifting to one side of the roof. Other ways that snow can increase roof loads are by sliding and drifting into valleys between two connecting roof lines. Snow can also slide from a higher building or roof onto a lower roof. Be sure to let the truss supplier know about any connecting roof lines; and.
- a factor that is not considered today, but may become important, is the special case of wide roofs or 100 to 200 feet wide. A snow drift on a wider roof is much deeper than a drift on a 36 foot wide roof.

"Proper truss installation is the next important consideration. Don't leave out any braces," says Borg. "The longer web members of the truss are usually connected by 2 x 4's running between the trusses known as lateral bracing. If you leave these out the web may only be 1/4 as strong in compression."

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Bracing during construction is important. The roof doesn't have its full strength until the metal roofing is completely installed. Ask the contractor if the bottom and top purlins are spliced to make them continuous along the length of the building for wind protection.

"The final consideration is how the trusses are going to be protected from moisture," adds Borg. "If trusses get wet, the wood can expand and loosen the metal truss plates, or the plates can rust. Without good connectors the roof truss can collapse."

Don't allow any trusses to be exposed to barn moisture and gases. It's important to have a warm, dry barn. This is managed by adding heat to dairy barns, pig barns, and other facilities when it's too cold for animal heat to keep the barn dry.

Contact: Robert Borg
(403)340-5323

Tenderness quest

Scientists at the Lacombe Research Centre are trying to chew their way through the variables that may be having an impact on beef tenderness. A five-part study is being coordinated to shed light on what makes beef tender.

"This study is designed in response to a survey conducted by the Beef Information Centre that suggested beef is less tender than it used to be," says Dr. Jennifer Aalhus, meat quality scientist with the Lacombe Research Centre.

The Canadian Cattlemen's Association, armed with survey results, made a move in 1994 to make tenderness its top research priority. Researchers at the Centre are coordinating work being done in five key areas. The universities of Alberta, Lethbridge and Saskatchewan are lending their support to this research.

"Inconsistency of beef tenderness is the biggest concern," says Aalhus. "To determine the extent of this variability, we set up a retail survey. This information yielded an up-to-date, objective evaluation of retail product and was completed in the fall of 1996."

A new probe to detect connective tissue (the clinical term for gristle), designed by Dr. Howard Swalland at the University of Guelph, is being tested. Early results appear promising and the technology is being checked further to see if it has commercial potential.

"Finding the point where consumers draw the line between tenderness and toughness is also important," says Aalhus. "The study cross-tabulates consumer thresholds with meat's shear value, a measure of how much force is needed to cut through the meat fibres."

An effort to understand the cellular basis of postmortem tenderness comprises the fourth part of the study. One factor being reviewed is the role of rigor mortis and its influence on tenderness.

"A genetics study rounds out the program," adds Aalhus. "Ongoing research is focusing on micro-satellite genetic markers in an effort to understand and predict the hereditary aspects of tenderness."

Results of these studies will be completed and compiled by the end of 1999.

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Alberta tastes success

For the second year, the *Taste of Success* program took nine products submitted by Albertans and put them through rigorous taste, sensory and market-ready testing.

"The Taste of Success is proving to be a very valuable assessment program for market ready products," says Kerry Engel, rural development specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Before a new product hits market shelves, exhaustive evaluations can and should be done to test not only the product but the packaging, promotion and price. This testing can be very expensive and time consuming. Through the Taste of Success program, Alberta processors have the chance to test their products with consumers to see if the product is liked and if it would actually be picked up and purchased."

The program costs processors a $25 application fee and, if accepted into the program, an additional $50 program fee. The program includes a product development workshop, sensory evaluation, broker workshop and consultation, media evaluation and consultation, and technical assistance from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

"All product entries were screened and evaluated according to set criteria. Out of this year's entries, nine products were accepted into the program for full evaluation," says Engel. "Criteria for inclusion includes the quality of the product, its market ready status and the product business plan including both short and long term goals. The program takes the products to various centres where volunteers conduct taste and sensory evaluations. Each product is 'taste tested' by 50 individuals.

This year products involved in the Taste of Success included:

Popcorn Delight – a snack treat consisting of popcorn, cereal, nuts, peanut butter, spices and white chocolate. The product is currently sold at Farmer's Markets and through mail order. Company: Gifts From Our Kitchen, St. Albert, AB

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Wild Cranberry Sauce – this conserve featuring wild cranberry and cointreau is an old style preserve. It is currently available through specialty and Farmer's Markets in Red Deer and Sherwood Park. Company: Pickleberries, Sherwood Park, AB

Best Ever Brownie Mix – a dry mix product for making old fashioned brownies. Currently available at specialty food shops and Farmers' markets. Company: Aunt Maud's Mix Company, Morinville, AB

Black Forest Cheesecake – a product designed for the commercial (restaurant, bakery and catering) market. Some farm gate and Farmer's Market availability. Company: Bountiful Fruit Farm and Nursery, Bellis, AB

Pork Sausage Rounds – frozen sausage rounds for the consumer market. Currently available in northwest market through owner operated meat packing house. Company: Barrhead Custom Meat Packers, Barrhead, AB

Carrot Preserve – a marmalade that uses carrots instead of oranges. Sold through Innisfail Growers at Farmers' Markets between Calgary and Edmonton. Company: Claremont Farms, Innisfail, AB

Pastry Dough – a ready to bake pastry dough for the food service industry. Currently available only to the commercial market with hopes to develop a retail line. Company: Fife n' Dekel, Edmonton, AB

Angus Beef Jerky – specialty beef jerky. Currently available at specialty outlets, C-stores and at some livestock and sports events. Company: Northline Angus, Bruderheim, AB

Wild Turkey – natural, organic free range, wild turkey, packaged and sold fresh (can be frozen). Seasonal availability to food service and retail markets. Company: First Nature Farms, Goodfare, AB

"Along with receiving a taste evaluation that compiles comments from a number of Albertans, the participants are given help and assistance with their business plans, labelling and packaging, and if needed product formulation adjustment," adds Engel. "The program has proven, over the two years, to be a very valuable experience to participants. Alberta entrepreneurs are some of the most inventive and talented people I've ever met. They have the ideas, the drive needed to really make a dent in their chosen markets."

The Food Processing Development Centre (FPDC) was used extensively for various aspects of this program. The FPDC staff time dedicated to the Taste of Success was supported by a grant from Alberta Sunflower Seeds Ltd. This help and assistance is appreciated by the program coordinators and the participants.

The Taste of Success program, from application to final analysis and comments, takes three months. This program will be offered again next year. Registration information and application forms for Taste of Success '98 will be available in the fall of 1997.

For full details on eligibility, dates, application procedures and requirements, contact one of the program coordinators for the Taste of Success

Kerry Engel, Westlock (403)349-4465
Janice McGregor, Morinville (403)939-4251
Sharon Homeniuk, Stony Plain (403)963-6101
Karen Goad, Grande Prairie (403)538-5629

Contact *Kerry Engel*
(403)349-4465

Problem with root maggots new to the south

Root maggots, known as a serious canola pest in Edmonton and surrounding area, weren't known to be a problem in southern Alberta, until recently.

"A survey conducted in the High River/ Nanton/Okotoks area in the summer of 1996 confirmed root maggots in every field surveyed," says Kelly Patzer, crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Most fields had serious infestation levels with documented yield losses as high as 52 per cent in Polish canola. This finding is of great importance to canola growers."

Root maggots overwinter as small, dark pupae about two to eight inches beneath the soil surface. Adults, resembling small house flies, emerge from early May through to July. The adults lay eggs beneath the soil surface near the base of the plants in June. White larvae (maggots) hatch in three to five days and feed on canola roots, creating tunnels. Maggots, measuring about 1/4 inch in length, mature in about three weeks and pupate in the soil, often on or near the root surfaces in late July to August.

"Maggots feed on canola roots during the flowering or early ripening stages," says Patzer. "Damaged roots are readily invaded by root rot fungi, creating stress on the plants. On hot days, heavily damaged plants can appear wilted and pale green. Polish canola varieties are more susceptible to root maggots and yield losses can be double that of Argentine types."

Maggots prefer cool, moist conditions. Therefore, canola crops grown along the foothills in southern Alberta are more susceptible to root maggots than those in warmer and drier areas to the east. Damage tends to be worse in fields with lower plant populations and larger individual plants.

"Where growing season permits, Argentine canola should be grown to help reduce root maggot damage," adds Patzer. "Seeding at higher rates will also reduce root maggot damage. Five to eight pounds per acre of well placed seed usually results in an adequate stand. This is likely the most cost effective way of reducing root damage."

Other control methods include:

- delayed seeding until late May. However, the benefits are offset by reduced seed yields that normally result from late seeding;
- fall or spring tillage prior to seeding reduces the survival of overwintering pupae. This practice will not prevent adults from moving into a new canola field;
- insecticidal seed treatments are effective against root maggots, but control is limited to the early season. The adult flight period extends over a five to six week period. Most insecticidal seed treatments are not effective over this length of time. There is a new product with registration pending that may provide improved control; and,
- some seed placed sulfur fertilizer products help deter root maggots. One such product is MF101, developed by Tiger Resources, Calgary.

Contact: Kelly Patzer
(403)652-8300

Agri News Briefs

National leadership program

Canadian Agriculture Lifetime Leadership (CALL) is a program sponsored by the Canadian Farm Business Management Council (CFBMC) in partnership with the University of Saskatchewan. Thirty participants will be chosen in July to undergo an 18 month leadership development program. The program will cover relationships between government and agriculture; rural and urban development; international trade; global markets; environment and agriculture; and, barriers and opportunities facing the industry. This national program will develop a national perspective for participants. After graduating in March, 1999, participants will be able to help broaden understanding, support and appreciation of agriculture; help develop new market opportunities for Canadian farmers; and, increase awareness of the impact of agriculture on the Canadian economy. The program will use leading edge technologies via computer-mediated conferencing to facilitate online communication. The program begins with a workshop in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan in November, 1997, and includes international travel to a series of workshops and travel seminars in Ottawa, Ontario; Washington, D.C.; Quebec; New York State; Pennsylvania; Fredericton, Nova Scotia; Vancouver, B.C.; Mexico and Alberta. A tax deductible program fee is payable in two yearly installments of $2,500. For further information Terry Murray, CFBMC, (403)842-2336. To arrange interviews, contact Cory Galbraith, CFBMC Communications (819)682-2232, Jeff Culp, CFBMC Communications (519)539-9762.

The cost of industry R&D

The research and development process for all new food products of animal origin is both time-consuming and costly. The process is designed to ensure quality and safety in these foods. The Canadian Animal Health Institute (CAHI) has taken the process and broken it down into five phases - discovery, characterization, development, regulatory and post-monitoring. It takes an estimated 12 years for a product to go through the entire process. Discovery, phase one, usually takes two years and accounts for 15 per cent of the R&D costs. A product that successfully passes phase one, enters phase two, characterization. Promising compounds are further tested to determine which ones are most likely to succeed – 20 percent of total cost is used in this phase. During the development stage, up to 60 per cent of total costs are incurred. This is phase three and it includes comprehensive safety data being developed, collected and submitted to Health Canada. At the end of this phase, the product, now being considered for registration, has been in the works for up to eight years. Over the next four years, the product goes through regulatory review and, ultimately the ongoing post-registration monitoring phase. Approximately 5 per cent of all costs are associated with these final phases. The U.S. Animal Health Institute reports that only one in 7,500 compounds ever makes it through the entire research and development process, at costs of up to $250 million per compound. For further information, contact the Canadian Animal Health Institute (519)763-7777, Guelph, Ontario.

Trends impacting agri-food

Eight key trends in world food markets were identified in a report, *Changing Course! The Value-Added Agri-Food & Fibre Strategy for Alberta*, by Toma & Bouma Management Consultants. These main trends are likely to have a significant affect on value-added developments in Alberta for the next 10 years. These trends are:

- global population growth will continue while growth in Canada will remain stable;
- income is expected to grow faster in Asia than in Canada;
- trade agreements will continue to form and in turn facilitate a greater international movement of goods and services;
- environmental issues will continue to become more relevant and important in business and operating practices;
- world-wide, consumers are demanding natural, wholesome, quality products at good value;
- traditional siting factors (proximity to market) will continue to decline in importance;
- value-added products and niche markets will grow rapidly; and,
- strategic alliances, supply chain alliances, the formation of business groups and long term business relationships will be critical for survival and growth.

For further information, contact Lou Normand, processing industry division, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (403)427-7366.

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1997 Summer Farm Employment Program

With funding approved, applications will soon be available for the 1997 Summer Farm Employment Program (SFEP).

"The SFEP provides Alberta's youth with the opportunity to gain farm work experience as part of Alberta's Summer Temporary Employment Program," says Christine Paproski, program delivery specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Since the program began in 1972, it has helped more than 35,500 young people learn more about farming through practical work experience."

Through the program, full-time farmers will receive assistance to hire young Albertans from July 1 to August 31, 1997. The Alberta government pays up to half of the employee's monthly wage, to a maximum of $330 per month.

Prospective employees must be between 15 and 24 years of age and they cannot be a relative of the employer. Employment must be a minimum of 30 hours per week.

"Up to 500 young Albertans will be accepted into the 1997 program," adds Paproski. "Application forms are processed on a first-come, first-served basis and employers and employees must apply together."

Application forms and program guidelines will be available on May 5 from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development field service offices. Application forms will be accepted until all program funds are committed or until May 30, whichever comes first.

"Although all producers have an equal opportunity to apply, there is so much interest in the program that a number of applicants are turned away each year. Those interested in SFEP are advised to apply early," says Paproski.

Contact: Christine Paproski
(403)427-3124

Producers consider diversifying

There are almost 27.5 million acres dedicated to growing crops in the province of Alberta. Currently, 500,000 acres are used to grow special crops by a small, but significant, group of farmers that see diversification as a useful tool in their management strategy.

"The biggest reason to diversify is to increase the profitability of a farm," says Dr. Stan Blade, plant breeder/agronomist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Farmers diversify when there are poor markets and prices for traditional crops or to reduce marketing and income risk by having a greater variety of commodities to sell. Diversification

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is also an innovative way to address agronomic concerns, such as incorporating pulses into a rotation to obtain legume benefits, and it can satisfy an interest in accessing leading-edge technologies."

There are some diversification opportunities that involve the 'traditional' field crops (wheat, barley, oats, canola). Regions that start to grow cultivars due to genetic improvements in characteristics (maturity, disease resistant) or grow crops in ways that distinguish them as niche markets (organic production). As biotechnology takes on practical applications, plants have the capability to act as 'factories' for unique food, pharmaceutical and industrial products.

"Most diversification opportunities centre around the production of new crops, sometimes called alternate, specialty or replacement crops," says Blade. "Most of these crops are destined for export markets, due to small Canadian demand because of our limited population base. That means that markets and prices can be very volatile. Other concerns about diversification stem from limited information about the growing requirements of the crop, high capital investment in new machinery or the necessary handling facilities and a lack of orderly marketing systems in place."

Some Alberta diversification success stories are field pea production (11,000 acres in 1984 increased to 420,000 in 1995), mint essential oil distillation (two companies operating now in southern Alberta) and successful spice (caraway) producers.

"Diversification demands a great deal of preliminary research and evaluation," adds Blade. "Farmers must find out what crops fit in an area and how much they cost to produce. It is also essential to know what the end product of a crop will be, how it can be used and what consistency and quality of supply are demanded by potential buyers."

Contact: Dr. Stan Blade
(403)422-1789

Niche marketing herbs

Growing herbs has sparked the interest of many Albertans. Basically, there are three potential markets herb growers can access: direct sales, restaurant and contract. The amount of land needed, equipment required and the labour factor involved depends on the type of market you want to venture into.

"Direct sales is probably the most feasible for an existing u-pick or market garden selling to an existing customer," says Kerry Engel, rural development specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Further investment into this market for an existing u-pick or market garden would include a demo garden, handouts, recipes and one labourer. Entrepreneurs who have an unestablished market may incur higher costs including the purchase of equipment and land, as well as marketing and other start-up costs."

Chefs at upscale restaurants provide another market for fresh cut herbs and edible flowers. Minimum further investment for this venture includes one acre of land, a minimum of two people, walk-in coolers and a vehicle.

"You need to be fairly close to your customers in this type of market," says Engel. "Knowledgable staff and a good understanding of who the customer is and what they want is essential. It is important to establish a relationship with the customer and be willing to introduce chefs to new herbs. This type of venture is labour intensive and because of a lack of fresh herbs in the winter, markets can be lost."

Contract growing is growing two to three acres of the same herb for a market. These products are generally for medicinal products and the manufacturers of essential oil products. The key word in this type of venture is 'contract'. Don't do contract growing without having a contract in place for your crop first. This type of venture requires some serious up-front research and contract building, a minimum of one acre of land and, depending on the crop, special equipment.

"Diversifying into special crops, niche marketing, contract growing and the herb market are fascinating, but as with any business venture, it must be thought out and planned for success," says Engel. "There are business opportunities in these markets. Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's rural development specialists are available to assist Albertans research and plan their business. We're only a phone call away."

Contact: Kerry Engel
(403)349-4465

Watering systems equal conservation and quality

As Alberta's cattle industry continues to grow, so do concerns about the quality of water cattle are drinking and the care being given the water resource.

"Producers are looking for efficient and economic alternatives to watering livestock directly from dugouts and streams that will preserve the water source and its quality," notes Tamara Lewis, a conservation economist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

An obvious benefit of a clean water supply is herd health with less foot rot and decreased possibility of blue-green algae poisoning. Recently, studies have shown productivity gains when livestock are watered from a stock tank filled from a fenced-off dugout instead of directly from the dugout.

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"Using a watering system also protects the water source," notes Ken Williamson, an engineering technologist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's engineering services branch. "If stock don't have direct access to a dugout or stream, they don't trample in the banks."

This saves the producer from having to clean out the dugout and the environmental benefits are even larger. Limiting livestock access saves the riparian habitat and soil around the water course. Reducing streambank erosion and other soil loss also helps maintain the source water quality, as does keeping animal waste out of the water source.

There are many possible alternative watering systems – almost as many types as there are varieties of livestock watering situations. Some common summer systems include sling pumps, pipelines, access ramps and water hauling. Pumping systems can be powered by the sun, wind, gravity, electricity or livestock.

"Producers need to do what makes sense for their operation, whether they have a dozen head or 500," says Williamson.

Anyone interested in information about the different watering systems can borrow a new video from any Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district office. ***Livestock Watering Systems*** is an examination of eight different systems using working examples from across the province. The pros and cons of each system are outlined.

As well, Lewis is working on a publication designed to accompany and supplement the video. It will examine the costs of different water system units as well as their relative advantages and disadvantages.

Producers who want more information about stock watering options can contact one of Alberta Agriculture's regional engineering technologists – Williamson in Red Deer at (403)340-5324, Bob Buchanan in Barrhead at (403)674-8252, Orin Kenzie in Lethbridge at (403)381-5112, or local Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) offices.

Contact:	*Tamara Lewis*	*Ken Williamson*
	(403)427-3819	*(403)340-5324*

Fast Facts

- The Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute (PAMI) has published **The Stockman's Guide to Range Livestock Watering from Surface Water Sources** available for sale. Contact PAMI at 1-800-567-PAMI (7264).
- Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district offices all have a video library. Videos are available for loan at nominal costs. As well, there is access to the department's central video/film library. Besides the newest video on livestock watering alternatives, the department also produced *Keep a Clean Image: Livestock and Water*, a look at the effects of livestock on water quality in central Alberta.

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Magical beans and diesel fuel

For Daysland farmer Ken Eshpeter, agronomy is more than the "magical beans" of new crop varieties and land stewardship is more than a bigger tractor. He summed up those feelings in *Magical Beans and Diesel Fuel*, a poem he used to accept the **1997 ACTS Soil Farm Family Conservation Award**.

Audiences across the province have heard Eshpeter's sentiments in poetry before. *A Seedling's Prayer* and *The Neighbor's Farm Came By Last Night* were both featured in Prairie Fire Theatre's play **Creatures of Habit**. He also averages three or four presentations a year to conservation workshops and seminars.

Being in the spotlight for their conservation approach is nothing new for the Eshpeter family. Four years ago they were recognized with a regional family conservation award.

"It's always fun," he says of speaking to other farmers interested in his continuous cropping system. "I just love talking about this stuff." The 'stuff' is the potential, problems and solutions of conservation tillage.

He's done more than talk by taking a leadership role through provincial organizations such as the Alberta Conservation Tillage Society (ACTS) and local groups such as the Flagstaff Reduced Agricultural Tillers (FRAT) and the Battle River Research Group (BRRG) to spread the message and find solutions. In fact, Eshpeter's own conservation goals include motivating the Alberta research community about breaking down barriers to conservation tillage and developing a no-till cropping system for the black soil zone.

Besides leadership, the award recognizes a long-term commitment to soil conservation. The Eshpeters have continually refined their conservation practices since they began farming in 1979. Continuously cropping from the beginning, they started to use reduced tillage in 1982. In 1989 they moved to direct seeding into standing stubble. The final move from minimum to no-till came in 1994.

For the past few years Eshpeter has spent time modifying his seed opener. Better seed placement is a common concern, especially in the thin black and black soil zones, where there is often heavy residue on the soil surface. He has taken what he's learned over the years from conservation tillage and built a configuration he thinks will work – two narrow openers operating together with a coulter. He'll try his modification in this crop year.

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Conservation farming takes more than changing tillage practices. Eshpeter's system is based on long-term sustainable crop rotation, moving from canola to a cereal crop to peas and back to a cereal.

Weed control, a frequent concern of farmers considering a move to conservation tillage, has become easier for Eshpeter. Perennial weeds aren't a problem, because Roundup is an effective control and no-till means less "stirring and dragging" of perennial weeds such as thistle, toadflax and dandelions. Annual weeds have also lessened.

All in all, the Eshpeters have a winning conservation story – no potential for wind erosion, increased crop yield, a dramatically increased earthworm population, easier weed control, more spring moisture, reduced tractor draft requirements from softer soils and reduced diesel fuel costs from fewer tractor hours.

Two years from now, when the Eshpeters mark 20 years on their farm, they'll have added an estimated one more inch of top soil from their conservation practices. Continuing to build their top soil at that rate is another of the goals for the family of no-tillers including Eshpeter's wife Sharon and children Nathan, Lisa and Evan.

The ACTS Farm Family Soil Conservation award is presented annually at the ACTS annual meeting. The award is jointly sponsored by ACTS, Advisor Graphics, the Toronto Dominion Bank, Monsanto Canada and the Canada/Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture Agreement (CAESA).

Contact: Ken Eshpeter
(403)374-2403

Controlling ground squirrels

Spring is here and those pesky field rodents aren't far behind. Too often, people wait for warmer weather before tackling rodent problems only to learn they are several weeks too late.

"Many people decide to control ground squirrels after the youngsters appear above ground," says John Bourne, pest prevention and management specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Some field research shows that the best time to attack these rodents is just when they are emerging from hibernation. Removing adult animals in early spring has the advantage of eliminating up to six times as many animals that otherwise would appear later in the year."

There are several methods to control ground squirrels from shooting to drowning, but poison baits are the most common control. Two types of poison products are available for ground squirrel control; anti-coagulants and non anti-coagulants (such as strychnine and zinc phosphide).

Zinc phosphide (2%) ZP is an extruded, grain base bait.

The strychnine formulation is a 0.4 per cent ready to use, pre-mix bait on whole cereal or extruded cereal pellet. The anti-coagulant poison is available in either a liquid concentrate for mixing on grain or, in a prepared extruded pellet formulation. Always wear gloves when handling chemicals.

Pyrotechnic fumigants (gas cartridges) such as 'Woodchuck Bomb' or 'Giant Destroyer' work by suffocating the rodents in their burrows by producing gases of sulphur (odour similar to smoldering firecrackers). The fuse, when ignited, produces toxic fumes caused by the combustion of the contents in the cartridge. Consequently, fumigants could pose a fire risk and should only be used where the risk is low.

"In lawns, gardens, school grounds, cemeteries or other small areas where there are only a few ground squirrels, use traps, burrow fumigants or drown them with the garden hose," says Bourne. "Use live capture traps where pets, children or other non-targets are nearby. Burrow fumigants, which are readily available, work well where rodents are few in numbers."

In large areas such as pastures, hay or crop land, where only a few animals are present, you should trap or shoot them or use burrow fumigants to remove them quickly.

"Ground squirrels emerging from hibernation in early spring may not appear to be feeding and therefore the use of baits may be questionable. However, studies have shown that bait uptake is greatly improved by pre-baiting five to fourteen days in advance of placing out poisoned bait." says Bourne. "Pre-baiting means placing untreated bait in the rodents burrow entrances for one or two weeks. It's important to pre-bait with the same grain bait as the poison bait. Pre-baiting, particularly for strychnine or ZP treated bait, conditions the rodents to the bait and that increases the chances of them eating the poisoned bait afterward."

Ground squirrels appear to prefer hulless cereals such as oats or barley. Either of these grains can be used for both the pre-bait and the poisoned bait. Place a tablespoon or two of the pre-bait inside the burrow entrance of each active ground squirrel hole, or place a large quantity in a bait box or bait station centrally located to several active holes.

Following the pre-baiting period, place out the bait mixed with the anti-coagulant poison in the same fashion. If using anti-coagulant concentrate, follow label instructions carefully and always use clean, hulless grain.

"Anti-coagulants only work if the animal consumes at least two or three consecutive daily feedings. Any interruption of this consumption pattern could reduce bait performance," says Bourne. "Always ensure adequate supply of anti-coagulant baits. Keep the bait stations filled with bait until all feeding ceases. This could be as long as three weeks, to ensure maximum exposure of bait to ground squirrels."

Bait stations save a lot of time and effort when strategically located and they can be used to treat large areas at once. They can also be used in the presence of livestock. Bait stations can be made from a variety of materials found on the farm from old tires to pieces of PVC or metal piping or old pails.

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Make bait stations by cutting a three or four foot length of four to five inch diameter pipe. Secure it to the ground with iron stakes, rocks on either side or fashion a set of legs by cutting a couple of slits two to three inches into the pipe on the underside and inserting pieces of metal siding or thin plywood. Place the bait between the 'legs' inside the pipe to keep it contained in the bait station.

"Several plastic bait feeders are available at farm supply retailers or horticultural centres," adds Bourne. "Many are an inverted 'T' design made of square or circular tubing. Both work very well.

"Ground squirrels killed by either strychnine or anti-coagulants pose a potential danger to pets and other scavengers. Properly dispose all dead animals by deep burial or burning in an incinerator. Do not place in uncovered garbage containers. Remember to wear gloves when handling dead ground squirrels."

Contact: *John Bourne*
(403)853-8114

Improper hitching to tractors can be fatal

Farmers and others who use tractors are at risk for severe injury or death if proper hitching methods aren't used when towing or pulling objects with tractors.

In a recent update, the U.S. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), warned that improperly attaching a tow chain to a point above the tractor's drawbar can cause tractors to suddenly flip backward. Rear rollovers happen quickly and often result in injury or death.

"Sudden rear rollover of tractors is a hazard that can occur when pulling tree stumps, towing or hauling," says Solomon Kyeremanteng, manager of the farm safety branch with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Safety measures should be taken when using tractors for pulling."

NIOSH lists these steps to prevent accidents and injury:

- use farm tractors equipped with a rollover protective structure (ROPS), and wear a safety belt;
- carefully select the hitching point to the tractor;
- don't alter the drawbar by raising or shortening it;
- never attach the load directly to the axle;
- never use a two or three-point hitch as a single-point hitch instead of the drawbar;
- if the load attaches by a single point, attach it only to the drawbar;
- ensure that the tractor operator is familiar with safe use of the equipment;
- select a strong tow chain with a length sufficient to allow adequate stopping distance between the towed object and the towing vehicle to avoid collision and rear rollover
- ensure a cleared work area for greater maneuvering;
- use a slow, steady pull; and,
- when using a tractor to free an embedded vehicle, hitch the vehicles front to front and drive the towing tractor in reverse to minimize the risk of rollover.

"Take the precautions necessary to minimize the possibility of personal injury," adds Kyeremanteng. "Farm safety should be practised all year long and in all circumstances. Remember, ***A Safe Farm is a Great Place to Grow!***

Contact: *Solomon Kyeremanteng*
(403)427-4227

March weather cool

March weather was cool with below normal temperatures and near normal precipitation totals.

The provincial average temperature was 2.6 degrees below the 1961 to 1990 average of -4.1 degrees C. Most Alberta locations reported monthly average temperatures near normal to 4 degrees below normal.

"After the long, cold winter, March may have felt warm and mild but, the first week of March was cold with below normal temperatures reported," says Peter Dzikowski, agri-weather resource specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. The second week started with about three days of near to above normal weather, however, cold Arctic air returned temperatures to below normal. In anticipation of the first day of spring temperatures began to rise again on March 18 and 19. In southern Alberta, daily maximum temperatures reached 10 to 20 degrees C. During the last 10 days of March, temperatures remained near to above normal."

The greatest temperature departures, 2.5 to 5 degrees below normal, were reported in the central region. Bow Island was the exception reporting a temperature departure of 1.2 degrees warmer than the monthly normal temperature of -0.9 degrees.

The provincial average precipitation of 22.1 mm was 0.7 mm above the 1961 to 1990 average of 20.4. These averages are based on data recorded at 20 Environment Canada climate stations across Alberta.

"The Peace and central regions reported above normal precipitation, southern and north eastern regions reported below normal precipitation while the north western region reported near normal precipitation," says Dzikowski. "Amounts of 4.5 to 63.8 mm, or 24 to 265 percent of normal were reported."

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Agri-News Briefs

Tailoring practices through computer model

Start with an erosion prediction model. Add data bases with information about soil types, climate and landscapes. Mix with geographical information systems (GIS) to generate maps, and you could put together a plan to help combat erosion on your land. Global research has developed a number of sophisticated computer erosion prediction models. These models predict how much erosion is likely to occur and where the eroded soil is likely to end up. Most of these models make predictions based on soil type, cropping systems, tillage, landscape and climate. Adding GIS to the mix, gives an ability to make maps of the areas most susceptible to erosion. Combined with Alberta data bases, a farmer can sit down at a computer and create a number of scenarios. "It's like playing a computer game, plugging in a variable such as baling versus spreading straw and then pushing a button to see the difference in erosion," says Ralph Wright, erosion researcher with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's conservation and development branch. By asking questions of the model, farmers can tailor a conservation program to suit specific budgets, equipment needs, crop growing preferences and time schedules. For more information, contact Wright (403)427-3781.

Direct seeding takes off

Alberta farmers have demonstrated their commitment to soil conservation by nearly doubling the number of acres they direct seed. Between 1992 and 1996 the number of direct seeded acres increased by nearly 3.3 million acres to 7.14 million acres. That means just over one-third of Alberta crops are direct seeded. The statistics are from the Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative (ARTI) and Monsanto Canada. ARTI projects that another 420,000 acres will be direct seeded in 1997. There are two types of direct seeding – high and low disturbance. Neither use a tillage operation before seeding, but vary in the equipment used. Shovels, sweeps, discers and barrow packing – high disturbance equipment – are used in high disturbance seeding. Low disturbance uses equipment such as a no-till drill or seeder with a narrow opener. Since 1992 summerfallow acres in Alberta have decreased by 20 per cent or about 800,000 acres to an estimated 3.2 million acres. For more information about ARTI, contact Peter Gamache in Edmonton at (403)427-3361.

Varroa mites identified on Vancouver Island

On April 1, 1997, B.C. Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food officials confirmed that varroa mites have been identified in honey bee colonies on Vancouver Island. B.C. is an important source of bees for Alberta beekeepers and for several years Vancouver Island had preferred status as a source of varroa-free bees. Varroa mites were identified in mainland B.C. five years ago, making Vancouver Island a safer source for packages, nucleus colonies and queen bees. The identification of varroa mites on the Island leaves Australia and New Zealand as the only varroa-free sources of package bees. Hawaii can provide only queens bees. Each year, in early spring, some beekeepers purchase honey bees to replace winter loss or to expand their operations. With less than one month left before bees ordered from Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands begin arriving, beekeepers must assess their orders based on this new information. Honey bees can still be brought in from the Island, but the stock no longer has the varroa-free status and guarantee. Varroa mites are external parasites of honey bees that can be seen with the naked eye. If left untreated, these mites can decimate an entire colony. Treatment by formic acid solution or fluvalinate (Apistan strip) are effective but costly and labour intensive. For further information, contact Kenn Tuckey, provincial apiculturist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, (403)422-1789.

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CAESA built on conservation partners

The five-year Canada/Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture (CAESA) Agreement can be summed up in a single word – partnerships.

"CAESA built on the relationships established in previous agreements between three levels of government, farmers and industry to work together to find solutions to resource conservation problems," says Carol Bettac of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's conservation and development branch.

CAESA was the fourth in a series of federal/provincial agreements that addressed soil conservation and environmental issues. Federal support was provided through the national Green Plan. Some $35 million in funding supported five program components – farm-based, research, resource monitoring, processing-based and public awareness.

"The largest element was the farm-based program and it certainly reinforced what can be done by working together," notes Bettac. In partnership with 67 municipal agricultural service boards, 51 agricultural organizations and four aboriginal organizations, over 650 projects were carried out during 1995-96 alone. The projects included soil conservation, water quality, pollution and waste management, and wildlife habitat.

"An important part of this was the technology transfer through demonstrations, tours, field days, meetings and seminars," says Bettac. "The agricultural service boards and other organizations did excellent work in designing and delivering programs at the local level."

One of the largest partnership effort was the Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative (ARTI). CAESA funding helped the ARTI partners provide practical reduced tillage information to farmers through meetings, workshops and demonstrations. About 10,000 people attended the events between December 1994 and August 1996.

Another partnership effort supported by CAESA is the Parkland Conservation Farm near Mundare. CAESA funding also supported a riparian habitat management project of the Alberta Cattle Commission, the Canadian Cattle Commission, and Trout Unlimited.

Nearly 30 research projects were completed with support from CAESA. The subjects were extremely diverse from precision farming to cold climate composting to biological weed control in reduced tillage.

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CAESA also provided funds to monitor and inventory specific resources. One project compiled all soil survey information of Alberta's agricultural areas into a standard digitized format. Another discovered 11 aquifers in water-short areas of the province.

"A new element in the CAESA program was including the agricultural processing sector," notes Bettac. "Over 30 cost-shared projects focused on dealing with reduction of packaging, and waste water and other effluent produced by agricultural and food processing."

Although the CAESA program officially ended on March 31, $2 million in transition funding for a new program has been approved. This funding, says Bettac, will provide support to farm-based projects currently underway. On-going environmental sustainability programing is being finalized.

"Our goal with the next program is to continue to build partnerships that will develop and help producers and processors adopt more environmentally sustainable practices," she says. "As well, we want to efficiently deliver programs and minimize overlap and duplication."

For more information about the CAESA program, contact Bettac in Edmonton at (403)427-3885.

Contact: *Carol Bettac*
(403)427-3885

Fast Fact

- CAESA has supported extension activities, in particular, information resources including 24 publications, 43 technical reports, a high school science resource on conservation, a French version of **Conserving Soil for the Next Generation**, three displays and four videos.

Centre is stewardship connection

Founding the Land Stewardship Centre of Canada was stepping in to fill a void says the centre's executive director Ernie Ewaschuk.

Ewaschuk explains that many organizations and agencies are interested in land stewardship, but everyone asks, "Who has the time to put together the partnerships needed to make it happen. We felt there was a niche for us between conservation organizations, industry and land owners, in terms of both information exchange and promoting sustainable land uses," he says.

Centre co-founders are Ken Gurr and Dave Prescott. All three were previously involved with the now dissolved North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) office. They all felt – and had heard from the people and organizations they'd worked with – something was needed to pull together environmentally sustainable land management concept.

Their answer was the centre, an independent, not-for-profit company with a mandate to develop partnerships for conservation programs, projects and especially for exchanging knowledge.

Their work will have three thrusts. One is to initiate, help develop and co-ordinate education, demonstration and research projects and programs. The second is to foster multi-partnerships and lever funding. Finally, the centre will add value and complement existing programs and agency work.

Based in St. Albert, the centre began operation in the fall of 1996. Currently it has three major projects underway.

Ewaschuk, who is closely involved in all the centre's work, is co-ordinating a riparian habitat project in east central Alberta. Riparian habitat is the area along the waters edge. Project partners include two provincial departments (agriculture and environment), the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA), Wildlife Habitat Canada, the Alberta Fish and Game Association, the Alberta Cattle Commission, NAWMP/Ducks Unlimited and Alberta Research Council-Vegreville.

Gurr is leading a resource centre project that will provide a one-window information and referral service for all Albertans. The clearing house will provide information about all land-use conservation practices, assistance programs, agencies and a wide variety of resource materials. The project should be operational in early 1998.

Prescott is spearheading biodiversity and natural communities research. Three projects are already underway. One project involves co-ordination and fund raising for a co-operative research project on management and biology for the endangered piping plover.

Ewaschuk, who has over 30 years experience related to habitat conservation, land stewardship and the agricultural landscape, describes the centre's approach as "middle of the road". Its aim is developing sustainable ways to use land resources. "I believe there are ways to integrate agricultural and wildlife use on the same land base and we're striving to discover those alternatives. To be sustainable, land use must incorporate and maintain the ecological principles that function on the landscape," he says.

A board of directors is the centre's decision-making body. Founding members include Ewaschuk, Gurr and Prescott along with Vic Adamowicz and Arlene Kwasniak. A 20 to 25

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member land stewardship steering council will help set the centre's strategic direction each year at an annual meeting.

For more information about the centre's activities, call (403)458-5700, fax (403)458-5708 or e-mail lsc@compusmart.ab.ca.

Contact: *Ernie Ewaschuk, Ken Gurr or David Prescott*
(403)458-5700

Province's best 4-H speaker

Nicole Koch's speech on this year's topic ***Agriculture – Growing more than food, growing Alberta*** earned her the title as Alberta's best 4-H public speaker in 1997.

"Koch, a K.A.C. Nifty Needles 4-H Club member from Compeer, AB, was one of 14 top 4-Hers who qualified for the recent competition in Edmonton. All 14 had to speak at a minimum of three levels of competition to reach the provincial finals," says Carol Sullivan, provincial 4-H communications and marketing specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Each finalist had less than two weeks to research and prepare a four to six minute speech on the selected topic. Koch's *The Tie That Binds*, plus her impromptu speech won her first place."

Tied for second place were Kate Sanford from Stony Plain and Brienne McLane from Hussar. Sanford is a member of the Lakemere 4-H Beef Club and McLane is from the Hussar Nifty Knots 4-H Club.

Representing the Agriculture and Food Council, Ian Morrison, Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, Forestry and Home Economics, University of Alberta, addressed the 4-Hers and their families. When congratulating the finalists on the high quality of their speeches, Morrison noted that, "Young Albertans who have been through the 4-H program stand out in the Faculty and grow to become leaders in the Agriculture industry."

The 1997 Provincial 4-H Public Speaking Competition was sponsored by Agrium and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

Contact: *Carol Sullivan*
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Correct that sulfur deficiency

The expanding canola acreage and changes to crop rotations contribute to the risk of a **sulfur deficiency**. If already using sulfur in a maintenance blend or if adequate levels of 21-0-0 fines have been used, there should not be a problem.

"If you have not taken a soil test and are buying fertilizer now, blend in some sulfate sulfur (21-0-0, 34-0-0-11, 16-20-0-14) as the sulfide form (0-0-90) is less available," says Bill Chapman, crop specialist – cereal & oilseeds, with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Sulfur deficiency doesn't happen very often but when it does, crop yield can be devastated. As well as yield losses, the cost of other crop inputs, that can reach in excess of $120 per acre, are lost."

Recent soil tests may show adequate sulfur levels, but the higher levels found in some areas of the field could be masking deficient areas. These areas have very poor yields and don't have the green colour or yellow flowers in early July.

"A recent soil sample checked by the Agronomy Unit that does the soil research for Alberta Agriculture, showed more than 60 per cent of the field was deficient but still showed adequate levels in the soil test report," says Chapman. "The abnormally high levels in parts of the field masked the deficient areas. If this problem is suspected, calling in an agrologist or crop specialist to help is worthwhile. They can assist producers in taking separate soil samples in the suspected areas to correct the deficiency."

The actual sulfur requirement for 35 bushels of canola per acre totals 22 lbs., with 12 lbs. in the seed and 10 lbs. in the straw. Normally this isn't a problem unless an older forage field has just been put into canola or if the producer has not used much sulfur with cereal crop blends. The demand for the sulfur is very high right after canola crops have bolted and begun to set flowers that are fertilized by pollen to develop seeds in each pod. The real demand is during seed formation as sulfur is a key component of the amino acids in the protein.

"Sulfur is a key nutrient used in the formation of chlorophyll during photosynthesis," adds Chapman. "When sulfur isn't limited, canola has an increase in vegetative growth or green plant material. The larger leaf area increases the photosynthetic activity, which is transferred in higher seed numbers, seed size and pod numbers, that all add up to more yield."

The most obvious symptom of deficient areas is leaf cupping and purple discolouration on the stems. However, this is when it's severely deficient. Moderate deficiency levels might cause shorter and/or fewer pods and less seed per pod. Crops may be shorter and the deficiency may cause woodier plants that are pale green. Another noticeable effect of low sulfur is the increased occurrence of Alternaria Black Spot just before ripening.

"A good argentine canola crop can have between 25 and 35 seeds per pod, with 80 to 100 pods per plant. Polish canola has fewer seeds per pod 15 to 25, and 60 to 80 pods per plant," says Chapman. "A lower sulfur level reduces the number of flowers resulting in lower seed production. Maintaining a level of sulfate fertilizer of 22 lbs. per acre balances the nutrients and reduces deficiencies."

Contact: *Bill Chapman*
(403)349-4465

25 years of Alberta Pool 4-H recognition

For the past 25 years, the Alberta Pool has recognized Alberta 4-H delegates as they depart for the nation's capital to participate in the week-long National Citizenship Seminar. Six Alberta 4-Hers joined delegates from each province as they learned about the government process and what it means to be a Canadian citizen.

"This year's delegates were Lynn Sabin from Walsh, Jamie Golley from Tees, Michele Van Sluys from Ft. Macleod, Candace Wilkie from Byemoor, Russel Wildeman from Clive, and Stephanie Edge from Cochrane," says Marguerite Stark, provincial 4-H programs specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Prior to their flight to Ottawa, these excited 4-Hers participated in the 25th anniversary of the Alberta Pool sendoff banquet."

Alex Graham, Dan Muhlbach and Ruth Hunter brought greetings from the Alberta Pool. Graham, president of the Alberta Pool, congratulated the delegates on their achievement in 4-H and their involvement in their communities.

"Delegates from 25 years ago, Gerald Pilger from Camrose, Hugh Nestor from Camrose, and Shirley O'Hearn(Brown) from Sherwood Park, were on hand to reminisce and congratulate the Alberta Pool for its ongoing commitment to 4-H," adds Stark.

Mahlon Weir, 4-H branch head, presented the Alberta Pool with a plaque commemorating their support.

Contact: Marguerite Stark
(403)948-8510

Humans and hantavirus

Hantavirus is not a new virus. It appears to be widely distributed and well established in white footed or deer mice populations throughout North America. A series of fatal cases in the U.S. in 1993 resulted in isolation of the virus and determination that it is the cause of a previously unidentified medical condition.

"Following several human exposures to hantavirus in recent years, Alberta Public Health conducted a retroactive study of appropriate cases and has not detected any previous cases of the disease in Alberta," says John Bourne, pest prevention and management specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "To date, Public Health in Alberta has concluded that, while the disease itself is serious, it is not likely to be a public health problem since cases are rare and special conditions must occur for spread from rodents to humans."

The virus begins with general 'flu-like' symptoms but can cause severe pneumonia and respiratory distress, primarily in adults. Over 60 per cent of the cases have been fatal. At least two cases (including one in B.C.) involving wildlife biologists working on small mammal projects resulted in fatalities. Spread of the disease between humans does not occur.

"The virus is shed in faeces, urine and saliva of infected mice," says Bourne. "Thus, risk is restricted to persons directly handling mice or cleaning up contaminated areas. The virus can survive in dust or on bedding materials and aerosol transmission occurs when contaminated dust is breathed into the lungs."

Trapping or handling of live white footed or deer mice is not recommended. Children should be discouraged from capturing deer mice or using them in science projects. Dead mice can be handled safely with basic precautions: examine animals in a well ventilated area (outside), wear gloves, use a face mask, disinfect traps and equipment. The virus can be destroyed with diluted bleach, detergents and most general-purpose household disinfectants.

For more information, consult your family physician or the local Public Health Office.

Contact: John Bourne
(403)853-8225

Spring fed runoff

Most agriculturally-related water quality problems originate during spring runoff when snowmelt flushes manure and other contaminants from wintering and feeding sites into nearby streams, dugouts and lakes.

A new video, *Keep a Clean Image: Livestock and Water*, released by the multi-media branch of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, highlights Alberta farmers who have implemented environmental farming practices that reduce the impact on water quality from livestock operations' spring runoff.

"Spring runoff is one of the main ways of transporting contaminants to surface waters, says Sandra Cooke, water quality biologist, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Manure from cow-calf wintering sites can accumulate during Alberta's long, cold winters. Snowmelt during spring can flush manure along with other contaminants into streams, dugouts and lakes if it's not managed properly. Although it contains many valuable nutrients for crop production; is a good soil conditioner; and increases the biological activity in the soil, manure can be a source of contamination to surface and ground water.

"Manure contains nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen, organic material, and microorganisms like *Cryptosporidium*, *Giardia* and bacteria that can effect water quality. Drinking water, either from rivers or farm dugouts, that is contaminated by manure can be a threat to human health and livestock productivity can decrease if contaminated water is used for watering livestock."

The video emphasizes the need for maintaining good environmental stewardship. Alberta producers market their products using the clean and pristine 'Rocky Mountain' image to world consumers.

"If Alberta's image is tarnished by poor environmental stewardship, then so is our product marketability. Environmentally sustainable practices not only enhance productivity and maintain a clean image, they also protect the environment" says Neil MacAlpine, farm water management engineer with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

Proactive management practices of cow herds and manure are important and reduce the risk of polluting surface and ground water. For example:

- keep and water cattle away from streams and dugouts by providing alternative watering systems or restricting their access;
- control runoff by building temporary dykes of snow or earth to divert clean runoff around manure stockpiles or wintering areas;
- contain runoff from wintering and feeding sites and manure stockpiles in holding ponds; and,
- do not apply manure on frozen, compacted or snow covered soils.

With proactive manure and livestock management, farmers and ranchers can maintain the 'Rocky Mountain' clean image that gives Alberta its advantage in Canadian and world markets.

A copy of the video *Keep a Clean Image: Livestock and Water* can be obtained through the multi-media branch of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development for $25.00, by calling (403)422-3951. Copies can also be borrowed from any of the district offices of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

Contact:	*Sandra Cooke* *(403)427-3397*	*Neil MacAlpine* *(403)427-3779*

Agri-News Briefs

An alternative to plowing

No-till or direct seeding an annual crop into sod may be a practical alternative to plowing. A research team has had promising results from direct seeding canola, peas and barley into sod. They've been examining both the agronomics and the economics of the method. If yields in their study turn out to be similar to those from conventional plots, no-till seeding could offer savings through lower fuel, machinery and labour costs. As well, no-till fields are less susceptible to wind and water erosion. "Costs are a factor," says team member Jeff Prochnau of the Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development conservation and development branch. "The intensive tillage and harrowing operations typically used to convert sod to annual crop production are expensive and time consuming. We think no-till could be a viable option in many situations." Their research was a direct result of farmers seeking answers. "Some farmers are getting good results with direct seeding grasses to rejuvenate pasture and forage stands," he says. "Now they're asking about direct seeding other crops into sod as part of a forage-annual crop rotation." For more information about the project, contact Prochnau in Edmonton at (403)422-4385.

80/20 4-H rally

4-H enthusiasts will want to be at the Alberta 4-H Centre, Battle Lake, on August 23 to 24, 1997 to celebrate the 80th anniversary of 4-H in Alberta. During the two action filled days, participants will also celebrate the 20 years that the Alberta 4-H Centre has been in existence. The weekend will provide time for reminiscing, guided tours of the Centre, carnival games for the young at heart, food, fun and much more! The official ceremony is at 4:00 p.m. on August 23, but guests are encouraged to arrive earlier to share the 4-H spirit, their photo albums and stories. Early registration for the rally is $10 for ages 13 and older; $7 for ages three to 12 years. To assist in planning, event organizers are requesting registration by August 1. Camping spaces and dormitory rooms are available for overnight accommodation at a minimal cost. For further information, contact Linda Rasmuson, 80/20 Rally chairman and 4-H home economics assistant with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, (403)422-4H4H.

Flushing bar saves wildlife

The first day Tom Nicholson used a flushing device on his haying equipment, he flushed three ducks from the nest. He averaged at least one duck a day after that plus one fawn and a lot of small songbirds. The flushing bar, developed in central Alberta by Ducks Unlimited, is a light weight aluminum bar that attaches to the front of a tractor. Chains attached every foot along the bar move through the hay and flush wildlife away from the cutting surface. Wildlife mortality during haying operations has been a harsh reality for farmers since the beginning of mechanized agriculture. Hayland is habitat for a wide variety of wildlife species, particularly birds and mammals. They include waterfowl, upland game birds, grassland nesting songbirds and deer. Nicholson got the flushing bar from Ducks Unlimited Canada. The agency is supplying and installing the bars at no cost to farmers who annually hay 100 or more acres in the Alberta Prairie CARE delivery area. Currently about 40 farmers have the bars. Ducks Unlimited hopes to install another 40 by June in the pilot project area. Barry Bishop of Ducks Unlimited in Camrose describes the bar as a positive for farmers and wildlife. "It's a way that meets farmers needs. They don't like killing wildlife. One farmer was actually thinking about giving up a field because haying was killing so many ducks." Instead, he got a flushing bar. The bars are easy to attach to equipment and don't inconvenience equipment operation. Allan Hein who has had a bar for three haying seasons notes the bar can be folded up for transport between fields and in and out of gates. While the bar saves the duck hen, it can't save a nest in the equipment's path. However, the duck can lay more eggs. Nicholson, who also participates in a Ducks Unlimited delayed haying program, says he saw two ducks return to their nests after being flushed by the equipment. They both went on to hatch out successful broods. For more information about the flushing bar project, contact Bishop or Herman Rea in Camrose at (403)672-6786.

Hearing conservation for farm families

Continuous exposure to harmful levels of noise over extended time periods without proper hearing protection can result in noise induced hearing loss. Farm equipment is of concern because of the harmful levels of noise produced. Since farmers use equipment at regular intervals, or for long periods of time, the risk of hearing is great. The Agricultural Health & Safety Network in Saskatchewan have reprinted a publication that contains information and recommendations for farm family members on protecting their hearing. For more information or a copy of the publication, contact Solomon Kyeremanteng at (403)427-4227.

Connecting with your customer

The 17th Annual Western Canadian Conference on the Food Industry is being held at the Convention Inn South, Edmonton on May 5 and 6, 1997. The conference is an opportunity for members of the agri-food sector from government and academia to join industry producers, processors and distributers to discuss significant trends impacting the industry. The conference, organized by the Rural Education and Development Association (REDA) and Alberta Food Processors Association (AFPA), is sponsored by Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, AFPA, Alberta Economic Development & Tourism, Calgary Co-operative Association, Saxby Foods, and Western Economic Diversification. To register or for further information, contact Meta Ranger at REDA (403)451-5959, fax (403)452-5385, e-mail **ruraled@compusmart.ab.ca**.

Visions '97

The Alberta Agricultural Economics Association is holding their annual conference on May 1 and 2, 1997, at the Black Knight Inn, Red Deer. The conference theme is *Changing roles in Alberta's agri-food industry*. Sessions will deal with the changing roles of marketing institutions and the changing roles of agri-businesses. Presentations are being made by: Alberta Pork Producers Development Corporation; Alberta Chicken Producers; Potato Growers of Alberta; Rabobank, New York; ConAgra, Nebraska; AgriPartners International; Saskatchewan Wheat Pool; and, Alberta Value Added Corporation. For further information or to register, contact David Walker (403)427-3077, e-mail **walker@agric.gov.ab.ca** or Wendy Boje (403)422-2906, e-mail **boje@agric.gov.ab.ca**.

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MAY 23 1997

AGRI-NEWS

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Research in field peas and other pulses

As the acreage of field pea in Western Canada increases, the need for research to deal with specific production problems becomes more critical. In the past decade, there has been a strong effort by people involved in the industry to use advances in technology to ensure that western Canadian pulse producers have a strong competitive position.

"The research questions involved in optimizing production are many and varied," says Stan Blade. "Several disciplines are involved in a range of current research projects. Physiologists are looking at how the plant functions, trying to gain advantages by understanding how seeds germinate and if there are methods to increase seed vigor. Plant breeders benefit from this information and modify breeding methods to change the crop's characteristics, such as maturity, height, lodging strength, so that the crop is better adapted to local growing conditions."

Field management is also an important factor. Researchers have developed agronomic strategies to deal with inoculation methods, seeding rates and fertility requirements. The benefits of using pulse crops in western Canadian rotations have been documented in several studies. The necessity to control weed and disease problems has encouraged additional work in these areas.

"Pulse harvesting was identified as a problem area by producers," adds Blade. "Current research is working to establish what plant characteristics influence harvestability. Post-harvest storage and handling were identified as very important factors in seed production. Durability of the seeds and their ability to stand up to harvesting without cracking or splitting is one of the main areas of consideration."

Throughout Alberta, projects being conducted include:

- research on the most effective inoculant formulations for field peas (liquid, peat powder and granular),
- screening of hundreds of potential field pea varieties to select lines for high yield and ease of harvesting under Alberta conditions, and
- assessing adaptability of other pulse crops for Alberta (lentils, fababeans, dry beans and lathyrus).

Research is undertaken to provide a benefit to producers. It is important for producers to know what is happening at a research level so they can provide additional information to researchers and identify gaps in the current list of activities. The role of field peas is increasing in importance. Pulses have been used in several western Canadian feed trials and in some value-added enterprises. More work is needed as farmers and researchers develop expertise in this relatively new crop.

Contact: Stan Blade at (403)422-1789

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

They are what they drink

Alberta is known for its great outdoors, the Rockies and crystal clean water. This image helps maintain Alberta's market advantage for beef and other agricultural products to consumers at home and abroad. With production growth comes cattle herd growth and expanded livestock operations. This results in more pressures being placed on forage and water resources.

"Traditionally, cattle were turned out to pasture and allowed to walk through and drink from any wetland, dugout, creek, river or lake available to them," says Tamara Lewis, agrologist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD). "With the increasing numbers, there is growing awareness and understanding of the impacts this type of livestock watering can have, not only on the natural environment and other water-users downstream, but ultimately on herd health, productivity and bottom-line for ranchers and farmers."

A watering system can improve water quality and eliminates or lessens the problems that can arise from a degraded watering site, such as foot rot, algae poisoning, leg injuries, reduced rates of gain and death by drowning or from being stuck in mud.

For the last two years, AAFRD has been involved in research on pasture water quality and cattle performance. This pasture project involved comparison between cows and calves drinking from a stock tank pumped from a fenced dugout versus a similar number drinking directly from a similar dugout.

"Additional years' data must be collected before any conclusions are drawn, however, all researchers involved in the project agree that pumping water from a fenced dugout has made a significant improvement in cow and calf weight gains," says Bob Buchanan, agriculture engineering technologist with AAFRD. "Many factors could contribute to this enhanced performance. Improved access to water and water that smells and tastes better, encourages greater water consumption. The conclusion that can be drawn even with only preliminary data is that there are significant cost savings to be had by improving pasture water quality."

There are a lot of different factors to consider: herd size, water source, general lay of the land, availability of a power supply and remote locations. With all of the options and changing technology, it's hard for farmers and ranchers to get the time to look at them and compare the different systems.

"Cattle producers will now be able to get the information they need to make decisions on alternative watering systems by viewing a video that summarizes the pros and cons of eight different stock watering systems," says Lewis. "Battle River Research Group, AAFRD, Canada/Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture (CAESA) and Prairie Agriculture Machinery Institute (PAMI) produced the video titled ***Livestock Watering Systems***. An accompanying publication that summarizes the costs of the watering systems was also produced."

The video is available, on loan, from the AAFRD video library, main floor, 7000 - 113 Street Edmonton, local AAFRD district offices, agriculture fieldmen, regional conservation coordinators and through the conservation and development branch.

Contact:	*Tamara Lewis*	*Karen Yakimishyn*
	(403)427-3819	*(403)340-5325*

Improved baits for ground squirrel control

The performance of strychnine ground squirrel control baits has been questioned in the past. Those using these baits should find a significant improvement in their performance this year.

"The manufacturers of strychnine ready-to-use (RTU) ground squirrel control baits are now required to guarantee the level of active ingredient in their products," says John Bourne, pest prevention and management specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "This means that all rodenticide companies have to analyse their bait products before shipping them to retailers to assure bait products meet guarantee levels of strychnine. All RTU manufacturers are also required to incorporate approved quality control measures to maintain quality standards of bait production."

Bait manufacturers will be required to identify all bait products that leave their premises. Each container of RTU bait must either have a batch number or date stamp for purposes of recall and shelf-life expiration.

"In addition to these quality control requirements, there have also been manufacturing improvements to RTU baits," adds Bourne. "All ground squirrel strychnine bait manufacturers are increasing the level of active ingredient to 4,000 ppm (0.4%) which will be indicated on the container label."

When purchasing RTU baits, select only those products that display 0.4% strychnine and have a date or batch stamp number on the container. Follow label instructions when using the bait. Producers should see considerable improvement of these new baits over previous RTU baits.

To assist end-users of RTU baits, an information data sheet on bait use will accompany each purchase. To encourage end-users to send feedback on RTU bait performance to Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, an evaluation form will also be enclosed that can be mailed of faxed back to the department.

Contact: *John Bourne*
(403)853-8114

Getting a jump on spring

Finding out what's being produced for Alberta backyards this year takes only a visit to a greenhouse. More than 200 different types of bedding plants are being grown as potted plants and as hanging baskets.

"Winter has been really long this year and Albertans are anxious to begin spring planting so they can get some green and flowers," says Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza, greenhouse specialist with the Crop Diversification Centre - North, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Begonias, geraniums, dahlias and petunias are already flowering in greenhouses."

Geraniums did suffer a setback this year from a disease commonly known as bacterial blight. It is caused by a bacterium that originates with contaminated stock plants. When growers receive rooted cuttings, it isn't until they start growing the plants that the symptoms appear on the leaves and stems and the plants begin to die off.

"The disease blocks water conducting tissue in geranium stems and obstructs water uptake," says Mirza. "The typical symptoms of bacterial blight are the appearance of a 'V' shaped yellowing between the veins and brown spots surrounded by a halo on the leaves. Older leaves may also wilt. The disease was eradicated by discarding all the infected material from the greenhouses and cleaning the area very thoroughly."

Many greenhouses did not have the disease problem and Albertans should expect to get only clean material from local greenhouses.

The disease is specific to geraniums and the bacteria doesn't overwinter in plants grown outdoors. If you suspect that your outdoor-grown geraniums have the disease, don't take fall cuttings. Ensure plants are clean if you're propagating from cuttings.

Contact: *Mohyuddin Mirza*
(403)422-1789
Jim Calpas
(403)362-1312
Muhammad Younus
(403)422-1789

Contaminated wells are the pits

Every year, some farmers and acreage owners discover that barnyard runoff has made its way into the well and contaminated their drinking water. The biggest culprit in these problems is the well pit.

"In years past, it was common practice to cut well casings off about eight feet below ground level and construct a cribbed pit at the site," says Ken Williamson, agricultural engineering technologist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "These pits provided a freeze-proof location for the pump and pressure tank."

Well pits may have seemed a good idea but they frequently end up causing more problems than they solve. Under the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act (1993), well pits are no longer legal but thousands still exist.

Pits can act as funnels that allow surface water into the well with flooding and contamination occurring especially when water tables are seasonally high. Well pits, lethal traps for mice and skunks, need to be cleaned out as necessary. Decaying carcases are another potential contaminant. In addition to the threat of water contamination, pits can be dangerous for children.

"Pits are damp locations, a poor environment for electrical equipment. Water on the pit floor increases electric shock hazard," says Williamson. "As well as presenting an electrical hazard, pits are usually too small to allow proper servicing of equipment. If the well water contains methane gas, well pit explosions are another hazard that must be considered."

"There are methods to deal with pit problems," adds Williamson. "Not using a pit in the first place is the most logical suggestion. Instead, use a pitless adaptor. They make economical, sanitary, frost-free connections from the pump to the buried water line and are available through all water well companies. If a pit already exists, extend the well casing above the ground level, install a pitless adaptor and backfill the pit with clay."

If an existing pit is absolutely necessary, install an automatic sump-pump and be sure the casing has a properly installed sanitary well seal. Don't use the well pit for storing vegetables, rotten veggies make poor pit fellows.

"If seepage or surface water get into a well, pump it continuously for a day or two, then shock chlorinate the well," says Williamson. "A few weeks after the well has been shock chlorinated, test the well water for bacteria. These tests can be arranged through the local health unit."

Contact: *Ken Williamson*
(403)340-5324

Horse handling facilities

Putting up new fencing or corrals? Building a new shelter or adding on to an existing one? Is a new riding arena part of this year's plans? Picking up the new publication from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, ***Horse Handling Facilities***, should be the first step in the building process.

"The advantages of this new book are that it covers a wide variety of options in planning and building facilities and equipment for handling horses," says Les Burwash, manager of equine programs with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Suggestions and information will help horse owners and breeders develop a facility that will meet their individual farm needs."

The publication presents information, colour photos, illustrations and diagrams on horse barn designs and recommended methods of construction. It contains chapters on site planning, horse shelters, corral and fence construction, manure handling, feed storage and handling, riding arenas and ancillary equipment. Planning tips and guidelines for horse housing aimed at minimizing feed waste and reducing labour are included. Sections on building types, flooring materials, stall design, lighting, heating and ventilation, and watering systems, contain options that should be considered at the various stages of construction.

"This is one of the few publications that deals with the ventilation requirements that are so critical to the health of horses," says Burwash. "By using agriculture engineers in writing and reviewing the book, we've made sure it is up to date on all issues of horse handling and providing a healthy environment for horses."

Horse Handling Facilities is a good reference book that horse owners will want to have in their library. It features 63 colour photos, illustrations and diagrams to make the information easy to understand.

Copies of Horse Handling Facilities are available from Agriculture district offices, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's publications office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. To order by phone, call the toll-free line 1-800-292-5697 or 427-0391 in Edmonton. Cost of the publication is $15 (plus GST) add $2.14 for shipping and handling.

Contact: Les Burwash
(403)948-8532

Agri-News Briefs

Changing pivot to low pressure

At a recent seminar in Brooks, the benefits of low pressure pivot irrigation systems were discussed at some length. Several options and pivot systems are now available for purchase and there are many rumors and theories on how they work and run. There are no quick fixes and new low pressure nozzles don't necessarily fit with all systems. Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development irrigation specialists are excellent resource people to talk with if you're thinking of re-nozzling old pivots or buying a new one. They keep up-to-date with the latest technology and designs and have Alberta-specific experience that may take some of the guesswork out of irrigation decisions. For further information, contact Rod MacLean (403)362-1212 or any of the irrigation specialists in southern Alberta district offices.

Range management

The 7th annual Stockmen's Range Management Course Series in southern Alberta are being held in June and July this year. This is a field course for ranchers and other land managers that provides information about managing and sustaining Alberta's rangelands. Topics covered during the three-day course include: grazing strategies for grasslands and streams, range plant identification, judging range health, Stockmen presentations, range management and fish and wildlife considerations. The course will be held at: Maycroft on June 9 - 11; Elkwater on June 23 - 25; and, Antelope Creek Ranch (Brooks) on July 9 - 10. Cost of the course is $100 per person or $160 for couples. These prices include meals and pre-course readings. For more information or to register, contact Brenda Chmielewski or Barry Adams (403)381-5486, Lethbridge.

NAWMP

The North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) has released a progress review for the April 1995 to March 1996 fiscal year. Many changes in the organizational structure of NAWMP occurred during the past year. Ducks Unlimited Canada (DU) assimilated all functions and activities of the former Alberta NAWMP Centre (ANC). The Alberta NAWMP board (Alberta Environmental Protection, Environment Canada, and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development) and DU have worked diligently to deliver high quality NAWMP programs in Alberta. NAWMP is a commitment signed by Canada, U.S. and Mexico to recover waterfowl populations by restoring and managing wetland ecosystems, to conserve biological diversity in the western hemisphere. The program is designed to integrate wildlife conservation with sustainable economic development, and to promote partnerships of public and private agencies, organizations and individuals for conservation. For further information about NAWMP in Alberta, or to receive a copy of the progress review *Striving for Sustainability*, contact Brett Calverley at DU (403)489-2002, e-mail: **du_calverley@ducks.ca**

Alberta 4-H Council

The 1997 list of Alberta 4-H Council members was recently updated. Council members are: Marie Logan, president, Lomond; Norm Withers, 1st vice president, Lavoy; Arnold Pederson, 2nd vice president, Vauxhall; Tim Bowman, Edmonton; Larry Fuson, Edmonton; Darrel Neal, Lacombe; Pat Pringle, Didsbury; Otto Wedman, Wetaskiwin; Bea Anderson Beaverlodge; Margaret Davis, Rocky Mountain House; Greg Hawkwood, Cochrane; Diane Maull, Metiskow; Lee Stringer, treasurer, Sunnynook; Flossie Bodell, Sherwood Park; Aaron Fehlauer, Edmonton; John Lee, Calgary; Cheryl Mueller, Rocky Mountain House; Ed Pimm, Grimshaw; Carole Tkach, recording secretary, Coronation; and, Clinton Ziegler, Vegreville and Mahlon Weir, executive secretary, Edmonton This council's primary role is to advise Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development to ensure that 4-H educational projects and programs meet the needs of Club members and adult volunteers. For further information, contact Donna Cornish of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's 4-H branch, (403)427-427-4411.

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AGRI-NEWS

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International pig disease outbreaks

There have been two major international pig disease outbreaks in the past several weeks. The first was Classical Swine Fever (CSF) in Europe and the second was Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in Taiwan. Thousands of pigs have been slaughtered and restrictions on the export of live pigs and pork have cost the industries in those countries millions of dollars. Despite control measures, both diseases continue to spread.

"Both CSF and FMD are caused by viruses and are extremely contagious," says Julia Keenliside, swine veterinarian with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "CSF is also known as Hog Cholera (HC) and Varkenspeste. The disease only affects swine and wild boar. FMD, also know as Hoof and Mouth Disease, affects all cloven-hoofed animals (cattle, sheep, deer, etc.) but not horses. As the name suggests, FMD produces blisters or vesicles inside the mouth and on or around the hooves. Neither disease affects people."

Both CSF and FMD viruses can survive in pork, pork products and boar semen. The viruses can also be carried on clothing and footwear soiled with infected pig manure or pig secretions.

"Infected boar semen is thought to be responsible for some of the recent spread of CSF in the Netherlands," says Keenliside. "Infected pork products smuggled in from China have been blamed for the outbreak in Taiwan. Once the virus is introduced in an area, it is easily spread by the wind and is difficult to control. The 1952 outbreak of FMD in Saskatchewan was caused by an infected sausage brought in by an immigrant farmer."

As these outbreaks were announced, the Canadian government increased surveillance at airports, especially on flights originating in affected countries, to prevent the importation of products possibly carrying these viruses. Customs staff are inspecting travellers arriving in Canada with vigilance. Ten Canadians trained in Foreign Animal Disease Control have recently been sent to the Netherlands to assist with controlling CSF.

"There is no effective treatment for either disease," says Keenliside. "In the event of an outbreak, control measures include the slaughter of all animals in the area, restricting movement of all traffic in affected areas and restricting the sale of live animals, meat, meat products and semen."

A devastating effect of these diseases is the loss of export markets for a year or more at a time. Exports of live hogs from the Netherlands have been banned. The 1952 outbreak of FMD in Saskatchewan, for example, cost Canadian taxpayers nearly $1 billion in lost export sales and costs to clean up the disease.

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Alberta
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AGRI-NEWS Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development – Publishing Branch, Phone: (403) 427-2121

It is predicted that Taiwan won't be able to export pork for three to five years, until the outbreak is cleaned up. Taiwan supplied 40 per cent of the lucrative Japanese market, which means greater opportunity for Canada to sell into Japan. It also means increased pork prices as buyers scramble to find pork to fill the gap. Though FMD does not affect people, pork consumption has fallen in Taiwan as consumers question its safety.

"Both Canada and the U.S. are free of CSF and FMD because of strict federal government control of incoming livestock and livestock products," adds Keenliside. "An outbreak of either would devastate our industry."

Anyone visiting countries affected by CSF or FMD, or receiving visitors from infected countries, should keep a few precautions in mind:

- don't bring any meat or meat products into Canada or receive gifts of meat products from any foreign country: it is the law. Keep in mind that other areas such as China and Central and South America also have these diseases;
- don't bring any boar semen into Canada from any foreign country; and
- visitors or travellers returning to Canada must not visit any facility with livestock (farms, packing plants, feed mills) within 10 days of arrival and must not bring clothing, footwear or other objects that have been in contact with pigs or other livestock in the originating country.

Contact: Julia Keenliside
(403)427-4614

Update on AASPP

Land owners can expect to hear about their application to the Arable Acres Supplementary Payments Program (AASPP) over the next few weeks.

After receiving over 65,000 applications by the February 14, 1997 deadline, Alberta Agriculture Food & Rural Development (AAFRD) staff have been working to verify and process all the information. All applicants will receive a confirmation letter with a chart showing how many eligible acres they have for each land parcel listed on their application. Cheques should start going out in May.

"We had a tremendous response to this program, to the tune of 65,000 applications! We've been busy matching the land on the applications with the land assessment information provided by counties and municipalities," says Lloyd Andruchow, head of the program development and evaluation branch of AAFRD. "Once we get all the applications verified and all the data entered into the computers, we can figure out how much each acre will be paid out."

All the land information is being matched against the tax assessment information from counties and municipalities because it is the most up-to-date, accurate information available in the short time this program has to be completed.

"Unfortunately, some of the land assessment data we received is out of date," adds Andruchow. "But we can only use the official information we were given. We can only, at this point, deal with mistakes we may have made in verifying or entering data."

The AASPP has a budget of $50 million. Once all applications have been processed, there will be a final total of irrigated arable acres, dryland arable acres, and improved pasture acres. The total budget will be split up after the final numbers are available. The current estimate is $10 per acre for irrigated arable, $7 per acre for dryland arable, and $4 per acre for improved pasture.

Land owners might not receive payment if they have already received full payment under the Western Grain Transition Payments Program (WGTPP) or Permanent Cover Program (PCP). As well, land owners with fewer than 10 eligible acres will not be paid.

The AASPP was developed by AAFRD and the federal government. It will make payments on cultivated lands that were not eligible under the Western Grains program (Crow Benefit).

When the Crow Benefit was eliminated, the federal government initiated the WGTPP. It was supposed to compensate for the potential drop in land values that would result from getting rid of the Crow Benefit. However, not all the acres were eligible under the WGTPP because they may not have been producing WGTA crops at the time the program was delivered.

Contact: Lloyd Andruchow
(403)427-3338

Barns built to last

Careful engineering during the planning and construction stages and an investment in optimum structure design more than pay for themselves over the life of the barn. Functional design can extend the life of a barn, improve productivity of livestock and protect the health of farm workers. There are several factors to consider when designing a new dairy or livestock barn.

"Dairies and hog barns have some specific issues but many of the engineering principles apply to any type of barn," says Robert Borg, regional engineer with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The first consideration is the cost of electrical components and building materials. When making decisions on materials, consider the life of the building. Keeping initial costs low can mean higher maintenance and operating costs."

Cont'd on page 3

Design the barn from the floor up. Some wall and floor materials are much easier to clean than others, consider this when choosing flooring. If plastic flooring is going to be used, check to see if it will burn or if it is fire resistant.

"If planning a concrete floor, there are additives for concrete that reduce pore space to below bacteria size for better cleaning," says Borg. "The compromise is between a rough enough surface for traction and one that is smooth enough not to create foot and skin injuries. Grooves scored in the flooring promotes good traction for cows and helps prevent injuries."

Plan all buried lines carefully. Buried large plastic pipes that carry manure away must be placed, packed with sand and backfilled properly so they stand up to daily use. Going back in and digging up a collapsed pipe that wasn't installed correctly is expensive.

"A common belief is that dairy barns don't need supplemental heat, but there is some debate on this," says Borg. "You don't want the barn to get wet inside and some heating supplement can help keep it dry. Not only is it uncomfortable for the cows but a damp barn is prone to early deterioration."

When designing the roof of a barn, it is important to consider all of the local snow loads. Roofs attached to the main barn can catch snow drifts and should be constructed with stronger rafters. Make sure the insurance on your barn covers roof failures due to snow.

Wall coverings should be fire resistant. Horizontal wall girts for attaching metal sheathing can create a runway for mice and a horizontal chimney for fire spread. Vertical blocking should be placed between girts every eight to 12 feet or apply the metal horizontally to avoid the need for wall girts.

"If designing a dairy, the material used for lining the milk house also deserves a little extra consideration, too," adds Borg. "Puck board or high density polyethylene has become popular for this purpose. Nothing sticks to this recycled product, and that makes it tough to seal sheets together. The material also has a very high expansion rate when heated which could result in splitting seams and maintenance problems in the future."

Proper heat and ventilation add considerably to the life of a barn. Use good quality components to keep maintenance and utility costs down. Ventilation chimneys with aerodynamic inlets and unobstructed tapered outlets have double the airflow of straight chimneys with hoods. Even though they are more expensive per unit, they lower by half the electricity used for equivalent air flow and, because of greater efficiency, fewer units are needed.

"These are just some of the considerations that need to be addressed when building a new barn," adds Borg. "Before you start construction, contact your local Agriculture engineer or dairy association for additional information. A little advance planning can save time and money in the long run."

Contact: Robert Borg at (403)340-5323

Snowfluent

While Albertans were busy shovelling sidewalks and cursing the cold weather last winter, researchers from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD) were busy making more snow and hoping for more cold weather. AAFRD's farm water management unit, in cooperation with Delta Engineering (Ottawa), Alberta Research Council (ARC), Westcan Malting Ltd., and the Alberta Pork Producers Development Corporation took advantage of the weather conditions to test a new technology for treating wastewater.

"Snowfluent™ is a new technology that treats wastewater by turning it into snow," says Jeff White, CEO and president of Delta Engineering Ltd, the company developing Snowfluent™. "The water freezes away from the contaminants in a process called 'freeze-crystallization. During the spring, the clean water runs off leaving the nutrients behind on the soil surface to act as a fertilizer."

Snowfluent™ is currently being used to treat municipal and industrial wastewater in Ontario, Maine and the Northwest Territories. The tests being done on the process at Vegreville will determine its ability to treat two types of agricultural wastewater common in Alberta: hog manure and malting plant effluent.

The Snowfluent™ technology was tested on Westcan Malting's wastewater on two plots at the ARC site in Vegreville, and liquid hog manure at the Giebelhaus hog farm south of Vegreville. Site preparation for the malting effluent test began on January 27, 1997. A local contractor was retained to clear the natural snow from the area and build a containment berm around two 15 by 15 metre test plots. One of the plots was then lined with a waterproof liner. Meltwater will be collected from this plot during the spring melt and tested. The other plot remained unlined but had a series of small, shallow wells installed in and around it. These wells will be used to sample groundwater this spring.

Delta Engineering's mobile Snowfluent™ plant arrived at the ARC site on February 18 and snowmaking began that evening. Effluent from the Westcan Malting plant in Alix was transported to Vegreville in tanker trucks and deposited in a 50,000 litre storage tank.

"Unusually high daytime temperatures forced the snowmaking to be done during the night," says James Wuite, water quality analyst with AAFRD. "We were still able to make high quality snow, it just took a few extra days." Snowmaking continued until the morning of February 23.

The trial using liquid hog manure began February 14 with site preparation at the Matejka farm near Sylvan Lake. With the help of George and Tony Matejka, another 15 by 15 metre plot was constructed and lined. Unusually warm temperature forced the project to be moved further north to the Giebelhaus

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farm near Vegreville. This location, experiencing colder weather, also had favourable proximity to the laboratory facilities at the ARC. The liner from the Sylvan Lake site was removed and reinstalled at Giebelhaus' with the assistance of Dana Giebelhaus.

During the periods when snow was being made, samples were taken of the untreated wastewater and of the freshly made snow. These samples, and samples of aged snow, meltwater and groundwater will be used to evaluate Snowfluent's success in treating malting plant effluent and liquid hog manure.

"The proposed expansion of primary and processing agricultural industries in Alberta will undoubtedly increase the amount of wastes and wastewater produced," says Neil MacAlpine, farm water management engineer with AAFRD. "There is a need to handle these wastes in an environmentally friendly way. Snowfluent may be one such way."

Final results of the study are expected to be ready by the end of July. For more information, contact James Wuite (403)427-3747 or e-mail **wuite@agric.gov.ab.ca**.

Contact: James Wuite
(403)427-3747

Overwintered canola quality

Questions on quality and uses for the canola that spent the winter out in the fields are numerous.

"Crushers want to accommodate and help Alberta farmers where they can but some had bad experiences last year with free fatty acids that were out of sight," says Jay Byer, cereals and oilseeds specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. To assist producers who will be harvesting canola this spring, Byer contacted Alberta crushers to query them on the subject.

"It will be hard to use canola that stayed out in the field over the winter unless it comes in better this year than it did last year," says Tom Hastie of Canamera, Fort Saskatchewan. "Free fatty acids, even in very low proportions can rapidly cause value reducing rancidity in a vat of otherwise acceptable oil."

Comments from other crushers are mixed. "A lot of 1995's crop that stayed out was sample going into the winter and wasn't going to improve by spring harvest," says Maurice Regimbald of Canbra, Lethbridge. "The 1996 crop likely went into the winter better but it's hard to say for sure about the quality of the crop. There are also some environmental pitfalls such as sprouting that will happen if the weatherman doesn't cooperate. We'll have a home for all grades and will accept virtually all off grade spring harvested canola. We are definitely going to be buyers this spring."

"The quality of overwintered canola isn't likely to be a #1. The seed quality will need to be assessed before purchasing decisions can be made." comments Kevin Brassingtion of ADM Agri-Industries.

Canadian Agra-Foods are starting up a new refinery and will be crushing again in early May, however, they won't be crushing much off-grade canola right off the bat. Referring to the quality of the overwintered crops, Nick Underwood of Canadian Agra-Foods Inc., Sexsmith adds, "The cold wet weather at the start of April was the last thing needed to maintain the quality of last fall's overwintered crop. The crop may become saturated with the moisture from the wet snow and could lead to further downgrading."

Spring weather conditions worked against producers who were planning to get out early in the spring to harvest while the frost at night helped preserve and maximize the quality factor.

The crushers were unanimous about sending samples in as soon as the crop is off the field. The wrong thing to do is to show up unannounced at the crusher's door with a truckload of questionable canola expecting to dump it immediately. "Ship a sample to a crusher as soon as it's harvested and get it assessed," says Regimbald. "While it's not likely to make a #1 after being out for the whole winter, the extent of the downgrading is hard to say without a sample of the product from the bin."

Marketing spring harvested canola is one more challenge to add on top of an already challenging year so options must be carefully considered. Hastie suggests, "The elevator companies should look toward Europe and their biodiesel market as one of the better possibilities."

The best advice seems to be to get samples to potential buyers as soon after harvest as possible and to shop around to get the best return for spring harvested canola.

Contact: Jay Byer
(403)826-3388

Before grazing season begins

The long 'lazy days' of summer loom ahead. Pasture land, mostly wet and puddled right now, lays in wait of spring warmth to start producing.

"Every producer looks forward to turning cattle out to graze," says Trevor Yurchak, beef specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "There are a few considerations that should be kept in mind and a few tasks that need to be done to prepare the herd before turning them out."

Twelve things to do before grazing season are:

- tag all calves and ensure all cow tags are readable;
- ensure all records from the calving season are complete;
- do semen tests and bull evaluations on all bulls to be used;
- separate heifers and prepare them for breeding one cycle earlier than the remainder of the herd;
- ensure energy and phosphorous levels in the cow rations are adequate;
- account for enough feed to hold cows off pasture until there is six inches of growth;
- have enough pasture to allow for below average grass growth - on average 4ac/aum (4 acres per animal unit month) is sufficient;
- test the electric fencer, make sure its ready for the rotational grazing season;
- look for opportunities to extend the grazing season - graze stubble, clean-up swath grazing fields, graze banked forage from last year;
- determine costs of grazing and look for opportunities to reduce costs, or improve profits;
- have calves processed prior to pasturing, allowing for a possible price premium by selling earlier; and,
- implant calves which were castrated or those not intended for the breeding herd.

"Taking care of these tasks before the herd is out on the pasture saves time, energy and, in the long run, money," adds Yurchak. "The grazing season looks very promising. Moisture conditions are excellent and pastures look like they came through winter in wonderful shape. Growth is progressing well and with some heat, we can be very optimistic about the grass season ahead."

Contact: Trevor Yurchak
(403)675-2252

4-H Hollywood comes to Daysland

Daysland was a flurry of activity as a film crew shot scenes for the new Alberta 4-H music video, **4-H...More Than You Ever Imagined!** Actors and actresses in the video were all local 4-Hers from the Daysland 4-H Community Club and the Daysland Small Engines 4-H Club.

"We have a lot of talent in the 4-H program," says Carol Sullivan, provincial 4-H communications and marketing specialist. "The soundtrack, featuring lead vocals by Nathan and Lisa Eshpeter, was recorded a month ago. We were in Daysland on April 19 and 20 taping the video portion."

Rick Bremness, director of photography with Polar Bear Entertainment and Rob Thirlwell, producer with the multi-media branch of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, scouted locations prior to choosing Daysland. Bremness says, "We had several things to consider. First, we needed a town with setting and people typical of the Alberta lifestyle, a nice rural feel with a touch of an urban look."

All involved with the production agreed that Daysland provided some very colourful and people-friendly locations. "It was the brick buildings, brightly painted playgrounds and the wooden benches along the main street that added to the story and the atmosphere of the project," adds Bremness.

"Deep, blue skies provided the backdrop for the first day of shooting and, take after take, the 4-Hers performed like professionals," says Thirlwell.

Acting in the production were: Armin and Monica Strohhaecker; Nathan, Lisa and Evan Eshpeter; Caryn Lansing; Jennifer Rubuliak; Karen Nickerson; Korey Heisler; Lynette Wolbeck; Melanie Candish; Michael Terway; Raeleen Sword; and Stephanie Saik.

"The cooperation of the Town administrator and Daysland residents was fantastic, even though at times we blocked traffic or used someone's doorstep for a shot," says Bremness. "It was a luxury to get cooperation from so many people. It makes a big difference on the screen."

4-H...More Than You Ever Imagined is scheduled for release in late spring. Sullivan plans to use the music video to market the 4-H program in schools, trade shows and on television.

Contact: Carol Sullivan
(403)422-4H4H

Agri-News Briefs

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Directory of approved materials for food processing facilities

Albertans developing or upgrading food processing facilities are required to use approved materials in their facilities. A subject-assessable listing of federally approved materials is now available on the Internet. The URL (address) of the listing is: **http://www.agr.ca/fpi/material/conteng.html**. This is a current list of materials and non-food chemicals that the Food Inspection Directorate state are acceptable for use in establishment operating under its authority. The primary purpose of this publication and the listing on the Internet is to provide a ready reference for both inspection personnel and representatives of the managerial staff of establishments, to indicate acceptance status for products intended to be used. No endorsement is intended for products named on the list. Users of this departmental consolidation are reminded that it is prepared for convenience of reference only and has no official sanction. For more information and guidance, contact John Kienholz, mechanical engineering technologist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, (403)427-2181.

1996 vegetable cultivar trials

Field vegetable trials were conducted in Edmonton at the Crop Diversification Centre North (CDC North) and the results compiled in a publication called **1996 Vegetable Cultivar Trials**. The publication will assist commercial and market garden field vegetable producers from central and northern Alberta with cultivar selection. All cultivar evaluation trials were based on single row, perfect plant stand evaluation. The summary and data, results from only one year of research trials, do not infer recommended cultivars. Use of varieties on a large field scale is not recommended until at least three growing seasons are evaluated. The trials were made possible by the support and participation of industry and personnel from the CDC North. Kuhlmann's Market Gardens contributed a grant to the vegetable research trials and many seed suppliers contributed seed at no cost. For further information, contact Belinda Choban, vegetable crop extension specialist with CDC North, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, (403)422-1789.

Applied research and demonstration plots

Regional Advisory Services (RAS) has prepared a list of research projects for 1997. Applied research and demonstration projects were identified in each of the five Alberta regions based on client and industry need. The southern, central, northeast, northwest and Peace regions research and demonstration projects deal with a variety of agricultural issues such as swath grazing, precision farming, native species reclamation, the use of geotextiles on low level creek crossings, control of broad leaf weed in grass, feasibility of alternative meats (ostrich), nutrient value of field pea straw, leadership development research, survey for parasitic wasps of stable and house flies, herb trial, effectiveness of triploid grass carp to provide algal and weed control in farm dugouts, and determining seepage from five hog manure lagoons using monitoring wells and remote sensing technology. For more information, contact Brian Laing, branch head of the northeast region RAS, (403)853-8124, Vermilion, or your local district office.

AGRI-NEWS

May 12, 1997

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Alberta hog opportunities

"World demand for pork is increasing at an escalating rate," says the Hon. Ed Stelmach, Alberta's Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Alberta's favourable geographic location and our ability to produce abundant supplies of feed grains and livestock at competitive prices places the province in a position to capitalize on the tremendous opportunities for expansion and growth in the industry."

Several important global factors have a direct affect on Alberta's pork industry. World population is growing by 90 million per year. East Asia is the fastest growing economic region in the world. The annual food market in this region will reach $450 billion per year by the year 2000 and the consumption of higher protein foods, including pork, is increasing in response to their higher disposable incomes.

Globally, pork consumption grew by 24 per cent between 1985 and 1992. It is continuing to grow by three per cent per year with some distinct regional differences. Pork consumption is increasing in the European Union, U.S., Japan and Asia and is decreasing in Russia and East Europe.

"Pork production is increasing in the U.S., Canada and Australia in response to the availability of feed supplies," says Stelmach. "One of the key opportunity factors is the substantial decrease in pork production in Japan, Taiwan, Korea, Holland and Germany. The recent outbreaks of Foot and Mouth Disease in Taiwan and of Hog Cholera in Holland have markedly reduced the availability of pork from these sources. The Japanese and Asian markets are looking for other sources of pork product supply."

Type and quality of pork produced are also shifting. Denmark is focusing on high quality pork shipped and sold within the European Economic Community. The U.S. is developing chilled (not frozen) pork exports to Japan. Countries that cannot compete in terms of quality and consistency supply lower-priced commodity pork. It is expected that commodity pork business will occur in East Germany and East European countries.

"Alberta's greatest future growth and sales opportunities for pork will be in Asia, primarily Japan, and Northwestern U.S.," adds Stelmach. "It is estimated that North Asia alone will require 15 million more market pigs each year by 2007.

"Taiwan has historically supplied almost half of the pork consumed in Japan. The ban on Taiwanese pork means that there is an immediate short fall of about five to six million market hogs. Aggressive growth in the pork production industry is needed to retain packer/processor options and to access the growth in markets in Asia. Without this aggressive growth, the Alberta pork industry could fall behind and loose its market share."

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

Growth in the industry and expansion of Alberta's pork exports means that if Alberta reaches its target of $20 billion of value-added shipments by 2005, there will be an increase of about 50 per cent in jobs in primary production and at least a three-fold increase in the food and beverage processing sector. A recent Missouri, U.S. study showed that for every 100 sows, one job was created in direct employment and four more in secondary employment. Economic multipliers for employment and gross output are higher for agriculture and food industries than most other industries in Alberta. Every $100,000 of investment in agriculture production results in an average of 2.6 jobs and $242,000 of gross economic output.

"There are few reasons why Alberta can't become a dominant exporter of competitively-priced, high-quality pork to Japan and other high value markets," says Mr. Stelmach. "Alberta, cooperatively, could pursue these opportunities. There is a need to focus on value chain and quality assurance structures to ensure that we compete successfully."

Contact: Barry Mehr (403)427-2442
Ron Glen (403)427-2137

Note: This is the first *Agri-News* article in a series on Alberta's pork industry. Interviews with Minister Stelmach on this subject are also being featured on *Call of the Land*.

Bindloss 4-H member receives Premier's Award

A 17-year old high school student from Bindloss is the 1997 recipient of the Alberta 4-H program's highest honour.

"Kristi Stelter was chosen as the Premier's Award winner from 130 of the province's top 4-H members who attended a weekend of personal development and group interaction," says Marguerite Stark, provincial 4-H programs specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "During the three-day annual Alberta 4-H Selections program in Olds, May 2 to 4, delegates participated in activities designed to improve leadership and life skills. This year's theme was Marketable Me. Through interactive activities and small group challenges, delegates learned about marketing strategies to help them market their skills, ideas and experience."

Stelter was selected from a group of finalists know as the Premier's Award group. The 1997 group also includes: Linda Armitage, Red Deer; Carrie Cholak, Lamont; Jennifer Hadley, Westlock; Ryan Halun, Radway; Leanne Holt, Redwater; Andrew Little, Fairview; Joyce Noga, Medicine Hat; Darren Stoneman, Rumsey; and, Tim Wray, Irricana.

Stelter says she is excited to be named recipient of the 34th annual award, "It's a great honour to represent Alberta 4-H." As one of her responsibilities, she will represent Alberta at the National 4-H Members' Conference in Washington, D.C. in March 1998.

"For the last eight years, Stelter has been an active member of the Bindloss Multi Club," says Stark. "As well as holding executive positions in her club, she participated in various regional and provincial 4-H activities. She is also involved with other youth groups."

Mr. Richard Marz, MLA Old-Didsbury-Three Hills, presented Stelter with the award trophy on behalf of Premier Ralph Klein and the Government of Alberta. Mr. Marz extended greetings and congratulations to the other participants and award recipients.

The many sponsors of the 4-H program were also recognized. Stelter will officially accept her award from Premier Klein at a future date.

Stelter succeeds Dalyce Russill of Elkwater, who received the Premier's Award in 1996.

Trip awards to 60 delegates were also announced at the awards breakfast on May 5, 1997. These members will represent Alberta at major educational programs and tours throughout Canada and the United States over the next 12 months.

"Alberta 4-H members, 16 years of age and older, can participate at Selections," adds Stark. "Members are evaluated throughout the weekend to determine their eligibility for trip awards. The selection process includes yearly 4-H diary points, a current events/4-H examination, and peer and group leader evaluations."

Selections is organized by the 4-H branch of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. It is sponsored by Lammle's Western Wear, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

Contact: Marguerite Stark (403)948-8510
Kristi Stelter (403)379-2259

Herbicides in water cause bedding plant problems

If tomatoes, dahlias, asters, lobelias and other bedding plants show signs of twisting and curling of new growth, there may be the possibility of herbicides in the water.

"Every year we encounter problems in bedding plants greenhouses," says Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza, greenhouse crops specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The damage can be serious enough to cause economic losses in commercial greenhouses."

Phenoxy type herbicides present in water cause twisting and curling types of growth abnormalities. These types of herbicides include 2,4-D, MCPA and Tordon.

"Contamination of water supply can occur through spraying of ditches, using herbicides in yards, aerial drifts and sometimes by using contaminated containers for watering," says Mirza.

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"The damage to plants varies with the species and stage of growth. Tomatoes and dahlias are very sensitive species and are the first to show the damage."

Plants transport large amounts of water from roots to the leaves and thus are able to concentrate herbicides in the cells and tissues. Once the concentration reaches a certain level, the symptoms become visible and plants are no longer salable.

"There are steps that can be followed to safeguard bedding plants from herbicide contamination," adds Mirza. "Be alert and know what herbicides are being used on the property and if your source of water supply is a dugout, know what herbicides are being used in the area. Let the county know that you'll look after the weeds in the ditches and that no herbicides are to be sprayed."

Another safeguard is to start a system of continued bioassays. These are easy to set up by growing sensitive plants like lentils. Any cupping of leaves on these plants are a warning sign to pursue the matter further."

Charcoal filters can help clean herbicides from the water, but, you must be sure of the size of the filters and water flow rates.

Contact: *Mohyuddin Mirza*
(403)422-1789

4-H Internet contest winner

Willow Creek Classics 4-H Multi-Club from Claresholm designed an award winning club web page in the recent Telus 4-H Internet contest. Willow Creek Classics will receive an Internet ready Pentium Multi-media computer sponsored by Agrium. This grand prize package also includes a colour printer sponsored by Lexmark.

"It was exciting to see such a diverse range of high quality, creative web page designs from 4-H clubs around the province," says Telus representative, Alan Kupchanko. "These 4-Hers demonstrated that a web presence can be used as an effective communications and marketing tool in a wide variety of environments. Although the Internet is growing rapidly, many clubs and organizations have been slow to adopt this technology. It's encouraging to the 4-H participants in this contest taking the initiative to use the Internet to its full potential."

Judges surfed through the club pages and discovered the vast array of member projects available in the Alberta 4-H program. The judges looked for information on club projects, members, leaders and upcoming events. They also looked at accessibility to more information if they wanted to become involved in 4-H. Bonus points were awarded for audio, java script and guest books.

Agrium representative, Ray Dowbenko was also impressed with the quality of the entrants, "The 4-Hers put a tremendous effort into their web pages. The fact that they're familiar with the Internet as a resource will be a benefit to members that go on to work in the agriculture industry." Dowbenko hopes all 4-Hers get on-line and will encourage their parents to access agriculture information through the Internet.

The Rainbow Riders 4-H Club from the Stettler district and the Prairie Rose 4-H Beef Club from the Hanna district received second and third place in the contest.

"Computers are becoming an important communication link in the agriculture industry and Alberta's 4-H program continues to grow with technology," says Carol Sullivan, provincial 4-H communications and marketing specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The Alberta 4-H site features program and project updates as well as the 1997 Provincial 4-H Scholarship application. As more and more clubs go on-line, 4-Hers will be able to communicate with each other and access current information."

All 4-H club web pages entered in the contest are available on the Alberta 4-H web site at **http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/ruraldev/4H**

Contact: *Carol Sullivan*
(403)422-4H4H

1997 Cowboy poetry gathering

The Cowboy Poetry Gathering of 1997 marks the 10th year that cowboy poets and musicians have been gathering in Pincher Creek to entertain the masses with their rhymes of cowboy antics, ranchin', lovin' and livin'! The event is being held on June 12 - 15, 1997 in Pincher Creek, Alberta.

"The event is sponsored by the Pincher Creek & District Agricultural Society and organized by a team of volunteers,"says Bev Barr, director of Ag Society event coordinator. "These gatherings are more addictive than popcorn, peanuts or soap operas. The cowboy and cowgirl poets and musicians are a talented group of people who share their thoughts and creativity, in the form of verse and song, creating a kaleidoscope of pictures for us to enjoy."

Each year, pictures painted by these talented poets tickle funny bones, pull at heart strings and leave many with a tear in their eye, from either laughter or sorrow. The Gathering helps individuals picture 'the cowboy way'. It also features a first rate Western Art Show and Sale, highlighting the talents of a variety of artists and craftsmen who work in a wide range of media.

"Poetry and song start on Thursday evening, June 12, with Poetry in the Park and a jam session around an open campfire," says Barr. "the week-end is full of activities and attractions. Everything from tack to cowboy clothes, jewellery and western home decor will be on hand for people to view and purchase. Demonstrations will be made on hot horseshoeing, rope making and horse packing. Stock dog

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cattle penning, the NWMP Mobile Museum, ranchers rodeo and a fashion show are featured throughout the weekend. Of course, there's the ever popular western dance on both Friday and Saturday nights and this year, a fireworks display will top off Saturday night with style."

Activities are continuous during the weekend. Events will be held in the Community Hall, the Horseshoe Pavilion or on the Calgary Stampede Special Events Stage. Tickets for the Friday and Saturday night feature performance, BBQ and dance must be purchased in advance. Day passes can be purchased at the gate and include access to all open venues.

"Once again this year, the kind folks from the Heritage Acres Antique Threshing Club have offered to shuttle people between venues with teams and wagons," adds Barr. "This extra nostalgic touch is always a winner with visitors. On the weekend of June 12-15, Pincher Creek is the place to be for fresh prairie air echoing with cowboy song and poetry."

For further information on the Cowboy Poetry Gathering of 1997, contact Bev at (403)628-2115. Ticket information is available at (403)627-5855.

Contact: *Bev Barr*
(403)628-2115

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Agri-News Briefs

Saline seeps, what they are and how they're recharged

Five new *Agri-Fax* are now available from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development to assist producers understand saline seeps. The factsheets explain how saline seeps are formed, the types of dryland salinity found in Alberta, the best crops to consider when planning a recharge rotation and recommended control methods for handling and reducing the development of saline seeps. Soil salinity affects about 1.6 million acres in Alberta. High salt concentration in saline seeps restricting crop yields by preventing water and essential nutrient uptake by plant roots. Various measures are used to control and reduce the formation of dryland saline seep, many of them are low-cost methods. However, the most important factor in choosing the correct control method is identifying the cause of the problem. The new factsheets include: **Dryland Saline Seeps: Types and Causes** - Agdex FS518-12; **Perennial Crops for Recharge Control of Saline Seeps** - Agdex FS518-13; **Annual Crops for Recharge Control of Saline Seeps** -FS518-14; **Perennial Crops for Salinity Control in Discharge Areas** - FS518-15; and, **Structural Controls for Dryland Saline Seeps** - FS 518-16. Agri-fax factsheets can be picked up at all Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district offices or from the publications office, main floor, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. For a full listing of Agri-fax and other publications available from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development check the *Ropin' the Web* Internet site at **http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/agdex/index.html**

Rendez-vous with tomorrow's consumer

Montreal, Quebec is the site for this year's annual conference of the Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors (CCGD). On May 25 - 28,1997, CCGD members will meet to discuss topics ranging from consumer and industry trends in Canada, facing this changing consumer driven market to creating new connections to consumers. The conference is designed to help the retail food and beverage industry present, price and promote product to consumers with greater success and finesse. For further information, contact Yollande Scott (514)982-0267 or fax (514)849-3021, Montreal, Quebec.

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AGRI-NEWS

May 19, 1997

Taking the initiative with pork production

"Alberta's pork industry is poised for a major expansion that will generate jobs, create wealth and contribute to the development of rural Alberta," said Ed Stelmach, Minister of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Industry and government are working to facilitate expansion of pork production and processing in response to emerging market opportunities. We're committed to this expansion as a top priority."

Several signs indicate that pork industry expansion is already underway. Packing plant capacity has recently increased and further expansions are being considered. As of January 1, 1997, inventory of breeding sows and gilts on Alberta farms is up three per cent over 1996 and a recent survey indicates existing producers are planning expansions to their operations which may add an additional one million market hogs to the system over the next two years.

Based on 1996 production of 2.8 million hogs, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD) is working with industry on some ambitious expansion goals. Targeted production for the year 2000 is four million market hogs and for 2005 is eight to 10 million market hogs.

"Our Ministry needs to direct additional resources to providing the expertise required to support this expansion. To this end, seven additional department positions focussed on pork industry expansion have been created," says Stelmach. "No new dollars are being added to the Ministry budget for these positions. They will be sourced through internal reallocation of existing Ministry resources."

Three of these new positions will strengthen the work currently taking place in regions or branches. Four will be allocated to a new working group whose primary role is to tackle some of the environmental and social barriers to hog expansion. Competition for these positions will commence in the immediate future.

The new positions are:

- two additional regional pork specialists. These two individuals will join the team of existing regional pork specialists located at Barrhead, Vermilion and Red Deer;
- one capital strategies manager for AFSC's Agri-Business Unit. This unit is working increasingly with investors and developers interested in the pork industry;

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

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- the other four positions will be focussed in a Pork Production Siting Group – two information officers to develop information and work with developers on planning a responsible approach to expansion, one intensive livestock operations (ILO) engineer to work with municipalities to encourage adoption of the ILO Code of Practice and provide technical support to the Department's Livestock Engineers as they work with local Municipal Development Officers, and one research engineer whose work is targeted at environmental barriers to pork expansion.

Implementation of these recommendations will increase the Ministry's commitment of human resources to the pork industry. "We are making this increased commitment in keeping with our partnership with the pork industry during this exciting phase of growth and opportunity," adds Stelmach.

AAFRD, in addition to the pork expansion opportunity awareness seminars held last November and December, provides business planning assistance for pork producers; on-going technology transfer to improve production efficiency and initiatives to encourage pork expansion through breeding management companies, pig management companies, feed companies and lending institutions.

Contact: *Ron Glen – Executive Assistant*
to the Minister, AAFRD (403) 427-2137

Dennis Glover – Director
Animal Industry Division (403) 427-2166

Northeast Alberta agri-food conference

A major regional food processing conference is planned in Smoky Lake on June 12 and 13, 1997, just prior to the Farmers' Day weekend. The conference runs from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and includes an evening banquet on Thursday. Industry tours on Friday, round out the conference.

"Drawing speakers from as far away as Ontario and Idaho, the conference explores the challenges and opportunities presented through the use of food processing for regional economic diversification," says Kathleen Ozmun, rural development specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Speakers will address the farm diversification and entrepreneurial business development opportunities emerging in this fledgling industry. They will also explore the challenges presented by health, sanitation and labelling regulations and the restrictions placed on start-up processors wishing to enter the retail market."

"This conference presents an opportunity for residents of the region to learn about this exciting new opportunity and to network with others with similar dreams and those facing similar challenges," says Raymond Mackay, chairman of the Smoky Lake County Agricultural Service Board.

The panel of speakers, that attendees can meet and talk to, includes a young entrepreneur who has developed a successful business through use of a shared use commercial food processing facility and an entrepreneur who has successfully combined the marketing of food products with rural tourism.

"Northeast Alberta is a prolific producer of a wide variety of primary agricultural products," says Mackay. "But, our experience in the area of value added processing is extremely limited. Value-added processing is the route we have to follow if we expect to significantly increase the returns we receive from our primary agricultural endeavours."

This conference will address the key concerns that face residents when they consider embarking on a venture in this area and is intended to supply many of the answers that will result in increased activity in value-added food processing.

Fee for the conference has been kept to a minimal charge of $49 for those who register prior to June 2.

The conference is sponsored by the Smoky Lake County Agricultural Service Board in cooperation with the Northeast Alberta Value Added Food Processors Association; Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, the Smoky Lake & District Chamber of Commerce; local food processors; the Smoky Lake Agricultural Society and the St. Paul/Smoky Lake Business & Community Development Corporation.

Conference tours give participants the opportunity to tour the Leduc Food Processing Development Centre and several privately operated commercial food processing facilities in the Edmonton area.

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Jeff Warawa (403)656-3730

George Rife (403)656-2110

Agriculture research and technology

"Agriculture research and technology transfer in Alberta is instrumental in keeping the province ready to respond quickly to emerging export market needs and opportunities for growth," says the Hon. Ed Stelmach, Alberta's Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Alberta's agriculture and food industry is one of the strongest in the nation and a major factor in this growth is agricultural research and technology transfer."

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As coordinator and as a source of funding, the Alberta Agricultural Research Institute (AARI) has contributed to many research and technology transfer projects. The results of these projects have included: a safer, more wholesome and more nutritious food supply; more efficient production of crops and livestock; added value to primary and intermediary agricultural products; and, improved cost effectiveness of agri-food production.

"Alberta producers have enjoyed tremendous success in raising their share of farm cash receipts (FCR)," says Barry McFarland, MLA Little Bow and chair of Alberta Agricultural Research Institute. "In 1989, the province emerged as the second largest earner of FCRs in Canada. In 1996, seven years later, Alberta nearly caught Ontario as number one in the country. In terms of Alberta's national share of FCRs, Alberta increased its 19 per cent share in 1987 to 22 per cent in 1996."

Alberta is now by far the leading producer of beef, barley, honey, grass seeds and various other commodities. It is also among the leading producers of canola and wheat.

"One of the projects AARI is very proud of being involved in is the work of University of Alberta researcher, Dr. Gary Stringham, in the development of Quantum, a new canola variety for Alberta," says Mr. Stelmach. "Quantum produces 20 per cent higher yield than existing canola varieties. An estimated $100-200 million annually can be earned by prairie producers from this new canola cultivar."

Many factors have contributed to Alberta's tremendous agricultural success in the past five years, research and technology transfer being one of the factors that has taken a leading role. This success is not only enjoyed by the primary sector, but also by the province's food and beverage processors.

"Food and beverage processing is Alberta's largest manufacturing industry," adds Stelmach. "The annual value of this industry's shipments increased from $4.27 billion in 1987 to $6.6 billion in 1996, an increase of 54 per cent. Research, again, plays a particularly crucial role in the development of diversified, safe and nutritious processed products."

Alberta's agriculture and food industry has also done very well in the export market. The value of agriculture and food exports has grown from $1.8 billion in 1987 to $4.4 billion in 1996, a 14 per cent increase. Provincial agriculture and food exports now go to 131 countries. These products enjoy an excellent global reputation for high quality agricultural commodities as Alberta offers the best to the world.

In 1992, Serecon Management Consulting Inc. of Edmonton, conducted an economic analysis of ten research projects and ten on-farm demonstration projects under AARI's Farming for the Future program. The results of this study illustrated the value of agri-food research to the industry, pointing to an estimated direct return to the Alberta economy of over $455 million over 15 years, a repayment of the entire cost of the program several times over. The total initial AARI investment in the projects was $7.24 million, making the return on investment ratio a staggering 60:1.

For more information on AARI and the research and technology transfer projects being pursued, contact Dr. Ralph Christian, executive director of AARI (403)422-1072.

Contact	*Dr Ralph Christian* *(403)422-1072*	*Mr Barry McFarland* *(403)427-0879*
	Ron Glen *(403)427-2137*	

Establishing a forage stand

Long term, profitable forage production depends upon getting a strong and healthy stand established in the first place. Failures are costly not only in of out-of-pocket expenses but in loss of anticipated production, fields becoming 'weedy', the potential for soil erosion and poor longevity of the stand.

"Planning is very important in establishing a productive forage stand," says Tracy Dow, crop specialist – forages with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Viable forage production should not be relegated to poorer soil classifications. Not all forage species-varieties perform equally under various soil and moisture conditions and proper variety selection is critical. Soil tests are an important step in the planning process as fertility, levels of alkalinity/salinity, and pH have a direct impact on new seedlings that are establishing and developing rapidly."

An ideal seedbed is moist, fertile and firm. Avoid heavy trash/crop aftermath areas or lumpy to very powdery soils. Most forage seeds are small and have limited reserves to sustain plant development for extended periods. Depending on seed size, soil type and moisture conditions, most forages should be seeded very shallow (1/2" to 1" in most cases). A wide variety of equipment has been used successfully in seeding forages. The objective is to provide good soil-to-seed contact into moisture to promote rapid and extensive root growth. In most cases and with most forage varieties, early spring seeding are the most successful.

"Forage crops tend to be slower to develop and traditionally were seeded with companion/nurse crops to provide quick ground cover and help reduce soil erosion," says Dow. "The vegetative cover helps reduce weed invasion into the young stand. However, the companion crop can be a strong competitor for nutrients, light and moisture. The difference between companion crops and heavy weed infestation is the harvested companion crop is normally of higher quality, easier to eliminate from the stand and offers some recovery of the high input costs in the establishment year."

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Companion crops must be harvested early as greenfeed and/or silage to eliminate as much of the competition as possible. Forages can be seeded as 'pure stands' or in mixtures depending on the end use of the product and how it will be harvested. Herbicides currently registered for use in forages are limited and are species specific, limiting their use on mixed stands. Overseeding of thin stands may be possible if using a no-till drill and providing good soil-to-seed contact. Thin stands less than a year old where weed competition is minimal, have shown the most success.

"The variety selected affects yield potential, length of time the stand will persist, growth and harvest management of the crop," adds Dow. "Select from varieties proven to adapt well and sustain over a longer term to the area and local condition. The different types of forages available allows for custom designing a forage program to fit a wide variety of end uses."

Factors that affect seeding rate are the method of seeding, seedbed preparation, soil type, fertility, moisture and the reason or end use. Seed weight of forage varieties is highly variable and individual seeding rates should be determined based on the desired plant population needed for a viable stand.

Contact: Tracy Dow
(403)625-1445

April weather cool

April weather was cool with near normal precipitation totals.

"The first half of April was generally cool with below normal temperatures reported," says Peter Dzikowski, agri-weather resource specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Temperatures were near normal between April 15 and 25 and above normal the last few days of April."

The provincial average temperature was 2.2 degrees below the 1961 to 1990 average of 4.0 degrees C. Alberta locations reported monthly average temperatures ranging from two to four degrees below normal.

The greatest temperature departures of about 2.0 to 4.3 degrees below normal were reported in the central region.

Rocky Mountain House reported the greatest temperature departure, 4.3 degrees below the monthly average of 3.3 degrees for April. Brooks reported the smallest temperature departure, 0.5 degrees cooler than the monthly normal temperature of 5.1 degrees.

The provincial average precipitation of 20.6 mm was 6.4 mm below the 1961 to 1990 average of 27 mm. These averages are based on data recorded at 44 Environment Canada climate stations across Alberta.

"The southern region which is usually the wettest region in April, received well below normal precipitation," adds Dzikowski. "Central regions reported below normal precipitation while the north western and Peace region reported near normal precipitation."

The north east region reported above normal precipitation. Amounts of 3.6 to 55.6 mm, or 18 to 221 percent of normal were reported.

"The Environment Canada temperature anomaly forecast for March to May, 1997 is for below normal temperatures on the Prairie," says Dzikowski. "For more weather and climate information try out our Internet site at **http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/climate/index.html**"

Contact: Peter Dzikowski
(403)422-4385

Alberta export service providers directory

In response to a need voiced by export and export interested industries in Alberta, an Export Service Providers Directory is being compiled. The directory is being developed by the Chamber of Commerce in conjunction with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD) and a number of government departments.

"This comprehensive directory, serving as an export guide to the businesses entering export markets, will include service providers ranging from accounting with international focus to packaging services," says Marcy O'Connor, market research assistant with AAFRD. "As of April 29, over 630 Alberta companies had submitted listings for the directory. The absolute deadline for submissions is May 30, 1997."

There will be 20,000 copies of the directory produced, available throughout the province at AAFRD, Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development offices. It will also be provided to Consulates and Embassies.

"Anyone knowing of service providers that are used by agriculture exporters can contact me at (403)427-4243 to verify whether or not they are already listed," adds O'Connor. "This is very much a combined effort to provide a valuable and useful directory to Alberta producers and exporters."

Contact: Marcy O'Connor
(403)427-4243

A pat on the back and warm hello

The 4-H Foundation of Alberta regretfully bid farewell to retiring director **Angus Park** of Trochu. Park was first involved in 4-H as a member in 1954 and has contributed time and energy ever since.

"Angus Park's involvement with the foundation began in 1988, when he was elected as first Vice President of Alberta 4-H Council," says Vicki Berger with the 4-H Foundation. "As a leader, a director on provincial council, and as foundation chairman, Angus never lost sight of why he was involved - the betterment of youth. After all these years, he still believes passionately in the value of the 4-H program. This passion has left a legacy of contributions to the foundation and the 4-H program. Thank you Angus."

The foundation's gavel has also been turned over. Current Chairman, **Jerry Hall** of Calgary, handed over the reigns to a new successor at the foundation's annual meeting in April. Hall served as foundation chairman for two years, and as a director on the foundation since 1991. Hall's 4-H roots go back to 1956 when he started working with the Alberta Wheat Pool as a grain buyer, but it wasn't until he was moved into a Public Relations role in Peace River in 1971 that he really got involved in 4-H. From there, he became a sponsor representative for the Alberta Wheat Pool on Alberta 4-H Council.

"Hall's keen insight, gentle approach and belief in the tremendous potential of our province's youth, has served the foundation well," says Berger. "He continues to serve on the foundation in the position of past chairman."

New to the foundation for 1997 will be **Donald J. Smith** and **Joanne Dykstra**, both of Edmonton. Smith is an accountant working as a managing partner in the Edmonton office of MacKay and Partners. He is also past president of the Edmonton Junior Chamber of Commerce and the Canadian Junior Chamber of Commerce. His volunteer positions as director of Canada Jaycees and the Fort Edmonton Historical Foundation should provide some new ideas and different perspectives to the organization.

Dykstra comes to the Foundation from Shell Canada where she works as territory manager. As a former member in the Ponoka 4-H Dairy Club and a past 4-H camp staffer, Dykstra has first hand experience in 4-H from a member's perspective.

"The 4-H Foundation welcomes both new directors and looks forward to their energy and fresh ideas," adds Berger. "The quality of volunteers who have served on the foundation over the years is truly impressive. Alberta's 4-H program and the foundation are fortunate to have such dedicated and committed individuals."

From the purchase of the land at Battle Lake, the development of the Alberta 4-H Centre, building of a scholarship fund which now features close to 20 awards, and the launching of an endowment fund campaign to secure the quality of our 4-H program – this legacy of achievement is a direct reflection of the quality individuals serving the 4-H program through the 4-H Foundation *and* the support of members and leaders across the province. Though the future is unknown, with committed volunteers and supportive membership, 4-H will continue to accomplish great things.

Contact: Vicki Berger
(403)427-2541

Agri-News Briefs

Alberta Chicken

New information shows that chicken is even lower in fat than previously thought. In 1996, the Chicken Farmers of Canada (formerly the Canadian Chicken Marketing Agency) contracted the University of Moncton to update the nutritional values for some cuts of chicken. The results show that skinless breast meat measured only 2.1 grams of fat per 100g serving. This is a 42 per cent change from the recorded 3.6g in the Nutrient File. Also, skinless leg meat (back attached) measured 6.9g of fat compared to 10.8g as listed in the file, a difference of 36 per cent. These new values for chicken will be incorporated in the Canadian Nutrition File this year. For recipes, nutrition information, storage and handling information, contact the Alberta Chicken Producers office at their new toll free consumer request line, 1-800-361-5260.

Introducing Morley Kjargaard

A new rural development specialist, business development, began work in St Paul on April 1. Kjargaard has a degree in Human Geography from the University of Saskatchewan that he describes as a combination of geography, economics, and sociology. He has experience from both Manitoba and Saskatchewan. In his position as Parkland West Economic Development – Community Development Officer, he worked extensively for five community economic development agencies in Manitoba, working with agencies, entrepreneurs and businesses throughout the region. Returning to Saskatchewan, he became the manager of economic development in Melville, working for the local business community, the city Council, and the local economic development committee. A priority with each of the projects Kjargaard worked on was the economic well being of the community. His past experience, included managing and administering small business loans and working with clients from the initial idea stage through business plan development and on to the financing and start up phases, equips him with the background and experience needed to face the challenges of his new position in St. Paul. For more information, contact Kjargaard at (403)645-6301.

Echinacea production workshop

On Wednesday, June 25, 1997 from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m., Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development staff in cooperation with the Alberta Greenhouse Growers Association and Canadian Herb Society, Alberta Branch, are conducting an Echinacea production workshop. Echinacea is a perennial plant with medicinal properties and interest in its commercial production has increased recently. The workshop will be held at the Crop Diversification Centre North, 17507 Fort Road, Edmonton. Subjects of discussion include enhancing germination, early seedling diseases, greenhouse and field production strategies. Seating is limited to 40 people and pre-registration is required. Cost of the workshop is $53.50, cheques made payable to Alberta Greenhouse Growers Association. For further information, contact Mohyuddin Mirza (403)422-1789.

Grasslands 2000

The 28th International Grassland Congress is scheduled for June 8 to 19, 1997. Congress Winnipeg, will be held at the Winnipeg Convention Centre and runs from June 8 to 12 and includes forage seed, parkland and central grassland tours along with the planned sessions. Topics covered at the Winnipeg sessions include: conservation, evaluation and utilization of plant resources; conventional and novel methodologies for plant improvement; alternative uses of forages; plant physiology and growth; soil fertility and plant nutrition; among others. A trade show is also featured during the Winnipeg portion of the Congress. From June 15 to 19, Congress Saskatoon held at the Centennial Auditorium will be the place to be. A farmers' forum is featured along with sessions on: forage and grassland management; forages for land reclamation and rehabilitation; seed production and management, temperate and tropical; nutrient cycling; and grazing system ecology, to name a few. For further information, contact Cindy McCreath at the International Grasslands Congress office, (403)244-4487, fax (403)244-2340, Calgary.

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Council members for Agricultural Products Marketing Council

Albertans who are proven leaders with senior level experience in the agriculture and marketing sectors are being sought for the Alberta Agriculture Products Marketing Council. The Council is a Crown corporation established by the Marketing of Agricultural Products Act. The Council is responsible for supervising operations and helping establish agricultural marketing boards and commissions. It's purpose is to enable commodity organizations to assist producers in Alberta's expanding agriculture and food industry be more profitable and globally competitive in their efforts. The Council meets approximately 10 times per year and members are appointed by the Hon. Ed Stelmach, Minister of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development for a period of up to three years. Any interested Albertans should apply in confidence by May 23, 1997 and quote competition number 97MABCO001 to: Executive Search, Alberta Personnel Administration Office, 3rd floor, Peace Hills Trust Tower, 10011 - 109 Street, Edmonton, AB T5J 3S8. For more information, contact Brian Rhiness, general manager Agricultural Products Marketing Council, at (403)427-2164, or phone (403)420-4398 or fax (403)422-0468.

Agri-Food export financing and transportation seminar

Alberta agri-food companies considering or interested in checking into exporting will want to attend the Agri-Food Export Financing & Transportation Seminar. The one-day seminar is being held at the Blackfoot Inn, 5940 Blackfoot Trail S.E., Calgary, on June 3, 1997. Subjects of discussion include: cash flow and profits; foreign currency risk management; credit management; legal considerations; customs brokers; freight forwarders; transportation requirements and alternatives; and, insurance issues. The seminar, as well as being a learning and information gathering opportunity, will give participants the chance to network with others in exporting. The seminar is sponsored by the Federal/Provincial Market Development Council and is organized by the Alberta Food Processors Association (AFPA) and Food Beverage Canada. Cost of the seminar is $50 for AFPA members, $100 for non-members, and $25 for students (plus GST). For more information or to register, contact Melody Pashko, AFPA, (403)256-8301, fax (403)201-2513, e-mail **melody@afpa.com** or Arnold deLeeuw, vice-president – trade and business services with AFPA, (403)444-2272.

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AGRI-NEWS

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Expansion in livestock operations

Several important land use and environmental issues are emerging as factors affecting the potential expansion of the intensive livestock industry in Alberta. Management of these issues and challenges is critical to ensure provincial expansion and growth is successful. Individuals and industries as a whole in partnership with rural municipalities are looking at ways to facilitate orderly expansion without compromising economic or environmental sustainability.

> **"While, it is important to the economic growth of the province to take advantage of agricultural opportunities, expansion will be done in an orderly, well thought-out manner. Alberta has a stellar reputation for clean and healthy air, land and water and maintaining that environmental health is paramount. Joint efforts by the provincial government, municipal governments and the industry are required as agriculture continues to develop."**
>
> ***Hon. Ed Stelmach, Alberta Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development***

To help producers and communities face the challenges of expansion of intensive livestock operations (ILO), siting guidelines are being addressed. Consideration is being given to issues such as, odor, contamination of ground water, spills and overflows from manure lagoons, competition for available water supplies, increased traffic on roads and dust and pest control.

"Having clear and predictable siting guidelines will help communities feel comfortable when approving development applications and will give producers a comprehensive list of requirements that they can work with during the planning and application stage," adds Stelmach. "Producers and municipalities need to have clear cut parameters to work with."

Most resistance to the development of ILOs arise from odor nuisance problems. In spite of ongoing research, odor continues to be one of the most significant development issues facing the livestock industry with few really practical solutions coming forward.

"Odor associated with ILOs is cause for concern with neighbours adjacent to the development and can result in serious political consequences for the industry," says Brian West, provincial waste management specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Unfortunately there's no simple answer but there have been big improvements in the technology and knowledge to manage

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
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Publishing Branch

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manure output and avoid excessive odors and contamination of the environment. The vast majority of pig production facilities are managed in a responsible, non-offensive manner."

Managing manure and odor in ILOs can include:

- **covers on storages** – the most practical covering at the moment, straw has met with considerable success. Several producers have tried this method in Alberta and are reporting excellent results. Further demonstrations on straw and other methods of storages coverings including various films and floating covers are planned for this summer;
- **manure treatments** – economies of scale may allow looking at technologies such as anaerobic treatment. Other simpler treatments such as solids/liquid separation and dilution have shown to reduce odors significantly;
- **aesthetics and general sanitation** – appearance of the farmstead can greatly reduce nuisance complaints;
- **siting** – locating barns and manure storage to have the least impact on neighbours and using shelter belts and physical screens can help aesthetically and may reduce effects of wind on the storage and actually reduce emissions.

"The Alberta Research Council in Vegreville and University of Alberta in Edmonton have acquired a noseometer and olfactometer. respectively. These new instruments will assist in the study and measurement of odors," says West. "The development of this technology will greatly increase our understanding of how odors disperse and will permit the measurement of new management practices in reducing odors from ILOs."

Under provincial climatic conditions, long term storage is a necessity for livestock producers in Alberta. Clay lined, earthen storages are considered the most economical method for providing long term manure storage. Although most Alberta soils have considerable clay content, variability of soil conditions on many sites is large. To evaluate a site for a clay lined earthen storage producers need basic initial information including:

- soil, groundwater and topographical maps of the area;
- aerial photos to determine exact distance to neighbours and watercourses;
- several test holes at possible construction sites to obtain knowledge of the subsurface soil and water table conditions. These holes should be at least a meter deeper than the bottom of the proposed storage;
- the degree of investigation depends on the level of environmental risk associated with each site.

Other environmental and sensitivity factors that must be considered include:

- permeability of the soils;
- what is the potential of sand or gravel layers at the site that can transmit contamination into the groundwater;
- the depth to groundwater and whether the aquifer is used by neighbors;
- the direction of groundwater flow and whether it moves toward or away from neighbours;
- the distance to neighbors.

"Fortunately, best management practices for manure management are more common sense than rocket science," adds West. "The most important recommendation to anyone planning on establishing or expanding a piggery is to pre-plan. Doing a thorough site investigation early in the planning stages and a manure management plan that anticipates environmental problems can avoid objections down the road including getting financing from the banker."

Contact:	*Brian West*	*Ron Glen*
	(403) 340-7607	*(403) 427-2137*

Fancy feathers

Wyandottes, Plymouth rocks, Buff Orpinltons, Sea Brights, Asiatic Cochins and Brahmas, African geese, Toulouse geese, Pekin ducks, Cayula ducks, bronze Turuets, bantam ducks, Chinese Owls, African Owls, Fantail pigeons, Modenas pigeons — Alberta Classic poultry, pigeon, waterfowl and fancy bird exhibitions will feature all of these and more.

"Anyone who's ever visited one of the Classic exhibitions may have wondered where all these different types of birds come from," says Martin Zuidhof, poultry specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "At the event there's a competition for each of the breeds, types and colours. People involved who have entered their birds are called ***Feather Fanciers***."

Just like at horse, cattle, dog or cat shows, birds being exhibited at the Classic are there for display and for judging. The skills in breeding, raising and showing exhibition poultry have been passed along from one fancier to another for as long as there have been fairs."

"The long-time, established breeders and exhibitors, are concerned that their attempts to preserve this *feather art* may be lost if young exhibitors aren't soon attracted to the hobby," says Zuidhof. "To this end, there are going to be special junior exhibition classes for the first time at the three major northern region shows."

The three main exhibition locations and dates are:

- Spruce Grove, August 16 - 17, 1997
- Northlands Farmfair, October 31 - November 2, 1997
- Wetaskiwin, February 22 - 23, 1998

Other possible venues are being considered for additional shows.

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"Anyone interested in becoming part of these special events or learning more about purebred poultry rearing and exhibition can contact Rico Sebastianelli, of Rico-Exotic Poultry, Bon Accord (403) 921-2119, or Casey Vandermeer, pigeon breeder, Sherwood Park (403) 464-2737," adds Zuidhof.

Contact: *Rico Sebastianelli* *Casey Vandermeer*
(403) 921-2119 *(403) 464-2737*

Alberta and the All-American flower trials

This year, All-American Selections (AAS) celebrates 65 years of testing and introducing new flower, bedding plant and vegetable cultivars grown from seed.

The Crop Diversification Centre - South (CDC-South) at Brooks has been an AAS flower trial site since 1972, and is currently one of two in Alberta. There are currently 26 AAS vegetable judges, 21 bedding plant judges and 31 flower judges. Nigel Seymour, nursery crops technologist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development at CDC-South, became a provisional AAS flower judge in 1993 and received approval by the Board of Directors as an official judge two seasons later.

"Each winter AAS sends the seed of promising new cultivars that are then grown with two or three similar proven cultivars for comparison," says Seymour. "Our grower, Greg Feth, grounds keeper at CDC-South, grows the transplants and moves them onto the trial site, usually by the first week in June. All pertinent cultural information – seeding and transplanting dates, plant vigour, insect and disease problems – are recorded throughout the season. Plants are evaluated three times during the season for flower and plant characteristics and pest resistance compared to the proven cultivars."

All data is sent to the AAS and compiled by an impartial CPA firm. At the January AAS Board of Directors meeting, the next year's winners in three categories are determined from the highest scoring cultivars that season. The seed producer then has three years to produce sufficient seed to meet market demands for each cultivar that has been designated as a winner.

"Since the AAS was founded in 1932, there have been 318 AAS Flower Winners and a total of 579 AAS Award Winners, which includes vegetables and bedding plants," says Seymour.

The AAS was founded by W. Ray Hastings in 1932. At that time, he encouraged seed companies to set up trial grounds to test varieties and develop marketing strategies for new vegetables and flowers from seed. As a result of Hastings' initial efforts and recommendations, AAS has become a respected non-profit organization that coordinates results from many trial sites to provide the widest possible distribution for recommendations for Canada and the U.S.

Recent flower winners to look for include

- 1997 – Celosia cristata 'Prestige Scarlet'
  - Gypsophylia muralis 'Gypsy'
- 1996 – Salvia farinacea 'Strata'
- 1995 – Petunia F1 'Purple Wave'
  - Rudbeckia hurta 'Indian S
- 1994 – Lavender 'Lady'
- 1993 – Nierembergia 'Mont Blanc
  - Verbena 'Imagination'

"The AAS Trial Garden, along with the Annual Flower Garden at CDC-South, is located near the entrance to the grounds," adds Seymour. "A planting of recent AAS winners accompanies the trial garden. The Annual Flower Garden displays annual flowers grown from seed donated by various seed companies. Each row is labelled so gardeners and professional growers can choose the cultivar desired for their own future use."

A yearly publication called Annual Flower Trials is available upon request at the CDC-South. The publication includes measurements and observations of all the plants in the AAS winners garden and the Annual Flower Garden. Visitors are welcome to explore the Annual Flower Garden and the grounds at CDC-South at any time.

Contact: *Nigel Seymour*
(403) 362-1350

Cosmetics – a value-added alternative

With the current interest in value-added agricultural products, we are seeing the birth of many ventures in Alberta. One unique direction people are taking is into the cosmetic industry. Alternative livestock producers to alternative crop growers have been investigating the potential of producing everything from hand creams to lip balm.

"Because of the current interest in this topic, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD) staff have put together a workshop to address the various aspects of this industry," says Kerry Engel, rural development specialist with AAFRD. "There's much to learn about the regulations, manufacturing processing and market potential for cosmetics whether they be canola oil based or emu oil based."

Submitting a product for *Cosmetic Notification* is a step many entrepreneurs miss when trying to put products on the market, and that is only the beginning. Packaging is just as important for a hand lotion as it is for a food product. Producers must choose a package that will protect and contain the product as well as reduce the chances of recontamination when being dispensed.

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"Processors of cosmetics, health and beauty aids should be code dating their products to track them for recall," adds Engel. "Microbial issues are also important to ensure consistent quality. Putting a hand lotion on the market, be it herbal based or rhea oil based, is not as simple as whipping up a recipe in your kitchen. Regulations, manufacturing practices, and quality control issues all impact the marketability of your product."

Cosmetics – A Value-added Alternative? is a workshop that takes an introductory look into cosmetic manufacturing in Alberta, being held on June 18th from 8:45am to 4:00pm at the J.G. O'Donoghue Building, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton. Topics include: regulations and manufacturing processes, building quality into cosmetic products, an Alberta manufacturer's panel, market assessment panel, and a session on export potential.

Contact: Kerry Engel *(403) 349-4465*
Joyce Lencucha *(403) 340-5358*

Injecting cattle without damage

In an active effort by the Canadian beef industry to reduce quality defects and improve food safety, injection site lesions were identified as a major defect in beef.

"Injection site lesions were identified as a major defect in beef by processors and retailers in Canada and the U.S.," says Joyce Van Donkersgoed, beef veterinary consultant with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "When any animal health product is injected into muscle tissue of animals of any age, scar tissue is produced. Research at Colorado State University has shown that even saline injected into a sucking calf can create scar tissue and increase the toughness of beef three inches away from the injection site. This scarring persists for the life of the animal."

Scar tissue must be trimmed out of beef products. When a lesion occurs in prime cuts of meat, the meat surrounding the injection site lesion is generally salvaged as stew meat or hamburger at a considerable discount.

A 'first injection site' audit was recently completed in Canada. The incidence of injection site lesions in Canadian fed cattle was:

• top butt (hip)	22%
• boneless blade (chuck, neck)	22%
• outside rounds (thigh)	8%
• eye of round (thigh)	5%
• inside round (thigh)	2%

"Down-grading cuts of meat due to injection site lesions costs producers money," says Van Donkersgoed. "Economic losses were averaged at approximately $9 per fed animal processed, or $19 million annually."

To resolve this problem, producers can make small improvements in the management of cattle treatment procedures. Good procedure practices are outlined in the Feedlot Good Production Practices binder, available free of charge from the Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA). Another publication, Cow/Calf Good Production Practices binder will be available this fall from the CCA.

Some good management tips producers should keep in mind are:

- use only licensed animal health products for cattle at label-specified dosage, route and frequency,
- strictly follow withdrawal periods, keep accurate individual and mass treatment records, and uniquely identify all treated animals,
- give **all** injections in the neck, **never** in the rump or thigh. This recommendation applies to all animals of any age, including cows, since a proportion of cuts from cows are used in steaks and roasts,
- use clean needles. Change needles every 10 to 15 animals and safely discard all dirty, dull, bent or burred needles in a *Sharps* container,
- make sure injection sites are clean and free of mud and manure,
- use transfer needles to reconstitute products like live viral vaccines,
- never go into a drug bottle with the same needle used to inject an animal,
- give no more than 10 ml in any one injection site and space sites several inches apart,
- give all clostridial (Blackleg) vaccines subcutaneously (sub-Q - under the skin) not intramuscular (IM),
- properly restrain animals when giving injections,
- avoid the use of dart or projectile guns for treating animals,
- use 18 or 16 gauge, 1/2" to 3/4" needles for sub-Q injections, 18 or 16 gauge, 1" or 1 1/2" needles for IM injections, and 14 gauge, 1 1/2" or 2" needles for intravenous injections,
- don't combine different vaccines or antibiotics in the same syringe.

"These are just a few good production practices producers should try to follow when treating cattle of any age," adds Van Donkersgoed. "The prosperity of the beef industry depends on the quality and safety of the food product produced."

Contact: Dr. Joyce Van Donkersgoed
(403) 782-5153; fax (403) 782-5120

Agri-News Briefs

1997 Provincial Direct Seeding Day

June 10 is the provincial direct seeding day and Willingdon is the site of choice. The direct seeding day is hosted by Crop Masters and co-sponsored by the Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative (ARTI). The demonstration site is located 1 mile west of Willingdon on the north side of Hwy. 45. A pancake breakfast goes from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. and then the day continues with direct seeding equipment demonstrations, GPS field yield mapping demonstrations, static displays and plot tours of direct seeded barley, fall seeded canola and direct seeded, fertility and weed control plots. Rain date is June 12, just in case... For more information, contact Kevin Yaremchuk, Crop Masters, (403) 657-3358 or Dale Chrapko, regional conservation coordinator with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, (403) 853-8226.

Canadian beef first in China

Canada is the first country to sign a beef import protocol agreement with China, a major step toward opening China's vast food market to more Canadian agriculture exports. The beef protocol sets the terms and conditions under which Canada may export beef products directly to China's retail market. A number of matters are yet to be finalized such as the review and approval of exporting plants by Chinese authorities. China expects to conclude the export criteria this year. This beef protocol with China, demonstrates the high esteem in which Canada's animal and food hygiene system is held. Canadian Cattlemen's Association president, David Andrews remarked, "Any inroads into the vast Chinese beef market can only be good news. Getting into China before our major trading partners provides a real opportunity for increased Canadian beef sales." For further information, contact the Canadian Cattlemen's Association (403) 275-8558. For information on Alberta beef production and exports, contact Reynold Jaipaul, livestock statistician with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (403) 422-3122.

Flax...the next decade

There have been a number of developments in the flax industry over the past year. Current trends are showing an increased demand for flax in the human diet. In keeping with this market driven growth, flax production and quality for today's growers received considerable attention at the conference in December, 1996. Conference proceedings are now available. To order a copy, contact the Flax Council of Canada at (204) 982-2115.

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AGRI-NEWS

June 2, 1997

CANADIANA

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Pork quality assurance

> ***"As Alberta actively pursues a larger share of the export market for agricultural products, it's increasingly important to continue following and employing our exemplary production protocols and document and track our health and environmental control systems. Alberta is known for the quality of our agriculture and agri-food products and that's a reputation we will continue to safeguard."***
>
> *Ed Stelmach, Minister of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development*

Food quality assurance is an important issue in domestic and international trade. Countries that have successfully entered the Japanese market have done so by providing products backed by quality assurance schemes. Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD) and the Alberta Pork Producers Development Corporation are working to finalize a pork quality assurance program to ensure and document the quality standards of Alberta pork production and processing.

"As work began, it became very clear that tremendous cooperation among pork producers, Alberta Pork Producers Development Corporation, veterinarians, the packing industry, the feed industry and AAFRD is essential," says Julia Keenliside D.V.M., swine veterinarian with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "So far, the main focus in the program is on three areas: drug residue avoidance, verification, and slaughter check information."

The Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP), an internationally recognized approach to quality control in food production, was reviewed and the principles in HACCP that can be successfully applied to pork production identified. The Canadian Pork Council (CPC) recognizes the value of a Canada-wide program and is working with the provinces to develop national standards. Keenliside sits on the CPC technical committee to develop these guidelines. The nine pork producing provinces have agreed to participate in a national program. To ensure the program can be implemented, some good production practices are also being developed by the CPC technical committee.

"Good production practices will ensure that certain quality parameters are met," says Keenliside. "For each shipment of hogs, the producer will certify to the processor that all hogs in the shipment meet all requirements of quality assurance. This

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

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system provides a very positive information flow between packers and producers. Not only does the packer benefit by receiving this additional information, the packer can provide information back to the producer that will assist the producer in making decisions about health and feeding practices."

Quality assurance principles include identifying hazards and risks that may arise during pork production and marketing and determining where the critical control points are to control these hazards. A range of procedures will be developed and fine tuned so that hazards and risks are controlled effectively. Another principle is keeping accurate and complete records and monitoring the entire production process to make sure the HACCP system is preventing hazards and risks.

"The pork industry realizes that they need to communicate the safety of their product to consumers," adds Keenliside. "The program is a way of telling the world about the high quality and safe product produced in Alberta. The program will assist Alberta producers compete with confidence in all markets, domestic and international."

Contact: Julia Keenliside (403)427-4614 Ron Glen (403)427-2137

Environmentally sustainable development study

As Alberta's agriculture and food industry takes advantage of emerging market place opportunities, there is a need to ensure the environment is not compromised. The industry is projecting a significant level of growth is necessary to achieve a $20 billion value added sector supported by a $10 billion primary sector. Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD) is initiating a study to identify potential environmental issues that could arise as a result of this growth and expansion.

"We are in a very exciting time of expansion and growth in agriculture and related industries. Along with that growth comes the responsibility to assess the impacts that could arise and take measures to ensure that quality of life is safeguarded", says Brian Colgan, director of irrigation and resource management with AAFRD, and chair of the group. "The study will anticipate and identify potential environmental problems. It isn't enough to just fix problems after they happen, it's important to take appropriate measures, to prevent problems before they arise."

The study will assess what impacts may arise and recommend mitigative measures to reduce the possibility of environmental impacts of potential new developments. The objectives of the study are:

- protect the environment and maintain or enhance the quality of life in Alberta,
- facilitate responsible expansion of agricultural industries,
- identify appropriate environmental regulations,
- ensure that market access is not compromised by poor environmental performance.

"Expansion in agriculture in the province must be done in a responsible manner", says Colgan. "A goal of $20 billion in annual sales of value-added products and $10 billion in primary agriculture production is attainable. Efforts, such as this study, will ensure that expansion is conducted in a safe and beneficial manner."

For this study, potential development scenarios will be generated and will form the basis for further environmental assessment.

"Alberta has a reputation as a pristine and healthy province and that must be maintained", says Colgan. "The study group will be looking at air, soil, and water quality, biodiversity and public health. We have a lot of information available to us already, notably through the Canada/Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture (CAESA) initiative."

The study will identify environmental issues relating to all aspects of current and potential agriculture and related industries in the province. Air quality includes emissions from processing plants, greenhouse gases, climate change, and odour issues. Soil quality encompasses erosion and nutrient depletion. Water quality looks at the effects of nutrients, micro-organisms, and other impacts on lakes, rivers and streams. Considering biodiversity involves evaluating the impact of development on Alberta's natural flora and fauna. Issues of environmental impact are also issues of public health and is the context in which health will be framed in this study.

The study group is currently comprised of technical experts within the department from a cross section of disciplines. The group will also involve industry and will be seeking input and advice from industry throughout the process. Private consultants with expertise in environmental impact assessment will be retained. A final report is anticipated by March 31, 1998.

Contact: Brian Colgan (403)422-4597

Snowed under crops to get FIDP priority

Farmers with snowed under crops that are still unharvested from last year will receive first priority from the Farm Income Disaster Program (FIDP). Ed Stelmach, Minister responsible for the Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC), announced the measure in May.

"Farmers don't have to wait to harvest last year's crop to file a 1996 FIDP claim," said Stelmach. "Although the usual procedure is to file for FIDP after crops are harvested and can

Cont'd on page 3

be assessed as part of inventory. AFSC is asking farmers with snowed-under crops to file right away, without unharvested inventory information."

Stelmach said this will enable AFSC to separate snowed-under claims and begin processing them immediately. After farmers have harvested their snowed-under crops, they are to forward their inventory value to AFSC, who will finish processing their FIDP claims as a first priority.

Farmers who burn or otherwise destroy their snowed-under crops must obtain verification from an AFSC adjuster that the crop has no value. Contact your local AFSC office to arrange for an inspection by an adjuster.

Stelmach said that early snow hampered harvest efforts in several regions of Alberta last year, most notably the Peace district. The sudden onset of winter left a substantial amount of unharvested crop on the ground in that area, with other parts of northwestern Alberta suffering a similar fate. "For some of these farmers, a significant portion of their crop year income is still lying on the ground," added Stelmach. "It is these farmers that FIDP is trying to reach."

FIDP is an income support program administered by AFSC. Farmers receive FIDP payments if the margin between their agricultural income and eligible expenses suffers more than a 30 per cent drop in one year, compared to their previous three-year average. Farmers must apply by July 31 each year to be eligible.

The deadline for 1996 FIDP claim applications is July 31, 1997. For more information and application forms, call toll free 1-800-851-5070.

Contact: *Ron Glen – Executive Assistant to the Minister,*
AAFRD
(403) 427-2137

Dave Schurman – Vice President
Finance and Administration – AFSC
(403) 782-8330

Flash cooling for Alberta produce

Fruits and vegetables begin to lose freshness and quality immediately after harvest. The rate of deterioration varies for different produce and depends on environmental conditions, such as temperature.

The engineering services branch of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD) is undertaking a project to discover methods to help Alberta producers ensure that Alberta produce meets the quality and price standards consumers demand. The project, *Developing appropriate postharvest cooling and handling systems for the horticulture industry in Alberta*, will develop cooling and handling systems by adapting existing cooling principles and technologies for Alberta producer needs.

"To increase the market for their produce, producers need to not only improve the efficiency of production or harvest practices but also apply immediate postharvest preservation practices," says Ike Edeogu, contract engineer with AAFRD. "Precooling of fresh fruits and vegetables as a postharvest practice is essential to remove field heat and slow deterioration."

A number of precooling methods were developed. These include: room cooling, forced-air cooling, package icing, hydro-cooling and vacuum cooling. Each method has its advantages and disadvantage. Factors, such as economy, convenience and the needs and preferences of individual operations, must be taken into consideration.

"As soon as a vegetable or fruit is picked it begins using its own nutrient resources in the attempt to remain fresh," says Edeogu. "Temperature has a major effect on the rate of deterioration manifest by loss of flavour, texture, colour and general appearance. Getting the field heat out as soon as possible helps preserve that 'just picked' freshness and extends shelf-life and quality."

Cooling is the big issue in maintaining freshness in produce. To maintain optimum freshness, producers need to remove heat fast, within minutes. Core temperature is usually within a few degrees of the ambient air. Quick cooling technology is available but needs to be adapted to meet Alberta needs.

"The size of the producer involved and the product or variety of products being produced are big issues when deciding what cooling and handling system will work," adds Edeogu. "Each vegetable and fruit has specific temperature needs, some can be chilled to a much lower degree than others. Keeping capital, operating, labor and time costs in mind, we're working with producers to customize systems that will work for them."

The research will take out the guess work for producers so that they can make informed decisions on which method will work the best for their operation. Data collection will be complete by September, 1997 and the results presented at Hort Congress '97.

Contact: *Ike Edeogu*
(403)427-2181

Calgary previews farm management for the 2000's

Farm business management experts from around the world will frame the challenges to farm managers and trainers of tomorrow at the 11th International Farm Management Congress in Calgary on July 14 to 19, 1997.

"Representatives from as far away as Colombia, South Africa and Australia will be attending the Congress," says Wilson Loree, organizing committee co-chair. "Things are different and things are the same around the world. We're looking forward to a cross-section of views, understandings and awareness."

The cross-section is provided by over 100 papers from presenters from over 20 countries. Keynote speakers will examine the implications of change on farm managers and the people who train them.

"Restructuring is probably the major consideration," says Dr. Douglas Jose, professor at the University of Nebraska and one of the plenary speakers. Jose will explain how developments in the U.S. parallel what will happen in Canada.

"The government has pulled together representatives from the private sector, commodity markets, grain elevator associations, lenders and farm organizations to discuss how a national risk management education program can be mounted and what it would entail," he added. "Part of the 1996 Farm Bill changed the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation to the Risk Management Agency, in the States."

As governments back away from farm support programs, farm managers will have to turn to the private sector for stable income. This, combined with the increasing size of farm units, makes it possible for farmers to deal directly with processors or manufacturers.

"The public sector will still be involved in agriculture," Jose says. "For example, basic record keeping and analysis is something the public sector has worked on for years and there is no great motivation for the private sector to get involved. But the private sector will become more and more involved in training."

Another plenary speaker, Dr. Len Norman of the U.K., will speak about specific training demands of farm managers in the future. He points to what farm managers are demanding and using now as one way to gauge changes.

Norman will present a paper that identified the extent to which farmers used particular management tools. "A more detailed study recorded how many farmers and managers used their working time so as to establish a picture of what farmers and managers actually do," says Norman.

Abstracts of these and over 100 other papers, are available on the conference website:
http://www.re.ualberta.ca/ifma.htm

"Registration information is also available on the website," says Loree. "Delegates not only get to hear from experts, they get first hand viewing of management practices on Alberta farms."

Two of the five days of the Congress are designated for field trips ranging from beef and dairy production to food and beverage processing. "We're not only looking at production," says Loree, " we're looking at the before and after the farm gate."

Delegates will be treated to traditional Alberta hospitality during the Congress, including a barbecue and rodeo in Balzac, a tour of the Western Heritage Center in Cochrane and a tour of Olds College. Registration for the full conference is $595 for early registration prior to May 31, 1997. There is also the option of attending for single days.

The event is sponsored by the Canadian Farm Business Management Council, the International Farm Management Association and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

Contact: *Margaret Ann Stroh* *(403)220-6229* *Wilson Loree* *(403)556-4240*

Act fast if exposed to pesticide

Prevention is the basic step in protecting yourself from any toxic product or pesticide. Always be prepared for an accidental spill or splash. Fast first aid can save lives.

"A one, two, three approach to handling pesticides can be very effective," says Maureen Barnes, protective clothing research associate with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "First, always carry clean water when working with pesticides. Water can rinse away a small spill. Second, let someone know where you'll be and what products you're working with. Third, if a pesticide touches your skin, remove clothing immediately and rinse the area with water. Follow with soap and water as soon as possible."

Special first aid procedures, such as rinsing eyes with water for a minimum of 15 minutes, should be strictly followed. If pesticide is inhaled, move the person to fresh air immediately. If they aren't breathing, use CPR or artificial respiration.

"If a product is swallowed, check the label," says Barnes. "Some products suggest induced vomiting, others don't. Never induce vomiting if the person is unconscious."

Always call a medical doctor or the poison information service immediately. Keep both numbers by the phone. The poison information service number is toll-free, 1-800-332-1414.

"Have the details ready," adds Barnes. "Product name, number and pest control products (PCP) number, how the poisoning occurred, how much product was involved and how long ago the accident happened."

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In 1994-95, approximately 200 cases of pesticide poisoning were reported to the Poison Information Center. Most cases can be treated at home, but 40 per cent of the reported cases last year required a hospital visit. Some required intensive care.

If there are children under the age of 15 in the household, it is advisable to store pesticides out of their reach and, if possible, in a locked area.

"Remember the one, two, three's of dealing with exposure to pesticides and handle all pesticides with care," says Barnes.

Contact: Maureen Barnes
(403)427-4369

Late blight of potato and tomato

The potato disease that caused the Irish famine in the 1840's, late blight, could threaten Alberta's multi million dollar commercial and seed potato industry. Alberta was the only province free of late blight last year. It occurred in Alberta in 1993 and 1994, but it was not observed here in 1995 or 1996. If it is allowed to return, it could cause serious problems for the industry. Home gardeners can help by watching for signs of the disease on their potatoes and tomatoes. Just a few infected plants in a home garden can cause huge economic losses. Under the right conditions, the disease could be spread quickly by wind or splashing rain to commercial crops.

"Late blight disease, which is caused by *Phytophthora infestans* fungus, can be introduced by imported infected seed potato tubers and tomato transplants," says Piara Bains, plant pathology research scientist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "It starts from spores produced on infected seed tubers, volunteer potato plants, tomato transplants and cull piles of infected potatoes."

Home gardeners should watch for the disease on their potatoes and tomatoes. Tomato transplants coming from B.C. might be infected, since the disease has been observed there for a number of years. "Late blight starts as small circular or irregular, light to dark green, water soaked spots near the tips or edges of lower leaves," says Bains. "Under cool and moist conditions the spots enlarge rapidly and become dark brown or black indefinite spots with a yellow halo around them Under high humidity, a white cottony growth of the pathogen can be seen on the underside of these leaves. The disease also infects tubers and causes brown to purplish spots on the skin. When the infected tubers are cut, the flesh is reddish brown. The discoloration extends to various depths into the tuber. Leaf symptoms on tomato are similar to those on potato. Infected tomato fruits develop dark brown to black spots. Under high humidity, the spots may develop white cottony growth."

Always buy certified seed. Do not plant a tuber if it shows any signs of rot. Monitor your plants weekly for symptoms. During cool and wet weather, check plants twice a week. Remove all infected plant parts. Bury them in a deep hole or put them in a garbage bag and take it to a landfill site. Do not compost infected plant parts.

To protect your crop, apply a non-systemic fungicide before disease symptoms appear. Use a fungicide containing one of the following active ingredients: chlorothalonil, copper sulphate tribasic, copper oxychloride, or zineb. These products are available at garden centres. Make sure you follow the instructions on the label.

Contact: Dr. Piara Bains
(403)422-1789

Agri-News Briefs

Boer goat convention

The Canadian Boer Goat Association's (CBGA) annual convention is planned for July 4 and 5, 1997 at Lakeland College, Vermilion. This year's theme is Meat Goat Production in Western Canada: Challenges and opportunities. Grazing association managers, professional agrologists and cattlemen looking for alternative solutions to chemical and mechanical brush control can take this opportunity to question North American experts on the subject. Grain producers and livestock producers looking for diversification options will also find this seminar informative and timely. Speakers from Canada and the U.S. will discuss: product demand, market potential for meat goats, marketing solutions, feedyard needs and requirements, new generation co-ops, product specifications, and using meat goats as companion grazers with other livestock. For further information or to register, contact Brian Payne, CBGA, (403)793-2506 or Chuck Richardson, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, (403)464-7955.

Ag industry council locates in Leduc

In April, the Agriculture and Food Council of Alberta opened the doors on its new offices in Leduc. The Council's responsibilities include: encouraging growth of the food and agriculture industry, managing the Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development Fund, and managing the Growing Alberta public awareness program. Communicating the value of food and agriculture to the public is an important component of the Council's activities. Opening their new offices gives the Council a center for spearheading growth and enhancing competitiveness of food, agriculture and agri-businesses in Alberta. For further information about Growing Alberta, contact Paul Hodgman, executive director, (403)986-4788 or Barbara Stroh, council manager, (403)986-3699.

Water erosion control

A new booklet, published by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, describes ways to maintain successful crop production while protecting soil and water quality. *Introduction to Water Erosion Control* outlines various land use and management practices that prevent soil from being washed away. It discusses such factors as: using land wisely, maintaining organic matter, maintaining crop residue cover, reducing tillage, using zero tillage or direct seeding, using conservation fallow rather than conventional fallow, growing forages and crop rotation and using direct seeding for pasture conversion. It also tells how to control severe erosion with grassed waterways, lined channels, drop structures and terracing. This free booklet is available from all Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district offices and from the Publications Office, main floor, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6.

Coming Agricultural Events

June

National Agriculture Biotechnology Council meeting
Agricultural Biotechnology: Resource Management in Challenged Environments
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, June 1 - 3
NABC (607)254-4856

Crop Growth Models and Decision Support Systems training course
Semiarid Prairie Agricultural Research Centre
Swift Current, Saskatchewan, June 2 - 13
Dr. Jame (306)778-7258, Swift Current, Saskatchewan
e-mail: jame@em.agr.ca

Alberta Poultry Producers' Workshop
Red Deer Lodge
Red Deer, June 3 - 5
Warren Chorney (403)250-1197

11th Annual Alberta Dairy Congress - Forage Competition
Leduc, June 4 - 6
Contact: (403)986-8985

World Pork Expo
Indianapolis, U.S.A., June 5 - 7
Jacky Clark and Alice Tong (403)244-4487
e-mail: apc@incentre.net

National Farm & Ranch Business Management Education Association Annual Conference
"Setting the Financial Pace"
Quality Inn
Salem, Oregon, June 7 - 12
John Caster (503)399-5066, Oregon;
Eugene Panasuk (504)399-5089, Oregon;
John Calpas (403)320-3311, Lethbridge;
John Whitehead (403)328-8989, Lethbridge

XVII International Grasslands Congress
Winnipeg, Manitoba and Saskatoon Saskatchewan
June 8-19, 1997
International Grasslands Congress Office (403)244-4487, Calgary; fax: (403)244-2340

7th Annual Stockmen's Range Management Course Series - Southern Alberta
Maycroft, June 9 - 11
Brenda or Barry (403)381-5486, Lethbridge

Provincial Direct Seeding Demonstration
Willingdon, June 10, 1997
Kevin Yaremchuk (403)657-3358, Two Hills

Lakeland Agriculture Research Association Annual Meeting
Lac La Biche Mission Historical Site
Lac La Biche, AB, June 13, 1997
Harvey Yoder (403)623-5218

Stockmen's Range Management Course
Fairview, June 18 - 19
Donna Lawrence or Colin Stone (403)624-6345

American Dairy Science Association
Guelph, Ontario, June 22 - 25
J.S. Walton or A. Hill (519)824-4120, Guelph, Ontario

World Conference on Animal Production
Seoul, Korea, June 22 - 26
Dr. Jong K. Ha, Dept. Of Animal Science and Technology,
College of Agriculture and Life
Science, Seoul National University, uweon, Korea 441-74

7th Annual Stockmen's Range Management Course Series - Southern Alberta
Elkwater, June 23 - 25
Brenda or Barry (403)381-5486, Lethbridge

Industry Appreciation
Fort Kent, AB
June 24, 1997
Guy Bonneau, (403)826-7260

Red Deer Direct Seeding Site Tour
Red Deer, June 26, 1997
Karen Yakimishyn (403)340-5325, Red Deer
e-mail: yakimis@agric.gov.ab.ca

Alberta Bison Association Convention 1997
Lakeland College, Vermilion
June 27 - 29
Josie Van Lent 853-6565

Bonnyville & District Kennel Club Dog Show
Bonnyville, June 28 - 30
Anita Johnston (403)963-6990, Stony Plain

International Fancy Food & Confection Show
New York, June 29 - July 2, 1997
Contact: (212)482-6440, New York

July

Canadian Special Crops Association meeting
Radisson Hotel
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, July 5 - 8
Contact: fax (204)947-5442

7th Annual Stockmen's Range Management Course Series - Southern Alberta
Antelope Creek Ranch
Brooks, July 9 - 10
Brenda or Barry (403)381-5486, Lethbridge

Western Canada Agronomy Workshop
Saskatoon Inn
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, July 9 - 11
Jim Farrell (613)230-2600, Ottawa, Ontario

11th International Farm Management Congress
University of Calgary, July 15-19, 1997
Calgary
Margaret Ann Stroh - (403)220-6229
e-mail: mastroh@acs.ucalgary.ca

NPARA (North Peace Applied Research Assoc) Field Day
Fort Vermilion, July 16
Scott Schaffert or Trina Dickson (403)927-3712 or 1-800-399-4229
e-mail: schaffert@msn.com

4th International Triticale Symposium
Red Deer Lodge
Red Deer, July 26 - 31, 1998
Don Salmon (403)782-4641; fax (403)782-5514, Lacombe
e-mail: salmon@agric.gov.ab.ca or don.salmon@agric.gov.ab.ca

16th International Congress of Nutrition
Montreal, Quebec, July 27 - August 1
Congress secretariat (613)993-7271, Ottawa, Ontario

August

Poultry Science Association
Pennsylvania State University
Pennsylvania, August 3 - 7
Roland Rotter, e-mail: rolland_rotter@isdtcp3.hwc.ca

Whoop-Up Days Trading Post
Whoop-Up Park
Lethbridge, August 6 - 10
Teresa Ternes (403)328-4491; fax: (403)320-8139
e-mail: whoopup@agt.net

Lakeland Agricultural Research Association
Annual Field Day
LARA Research Farm
Bonnyville, August 7
Guy Bonneau (403)826-7260, toll-free 1-888-773-7072,
e-mail: lara@incentre.net

Annual Field Day
Fort Kent, August 7, 1997
Guy Bonneau, (403)826-7260, toll-free 1-888-773-7072,
e-mail: lara@incentre.net

77th Annual Conference - Agricultural Institute of Canada, Who Speaks for Agriculture?
Truro, Nova Scotia, August 17 - 20
Brian Crouse or Susan Horne (902)893-6520
e-mail: AIC97@cadmin.nsac.ns.ca
Internet site: http://www.nsac.ns.ca/www/aic97/index.html

Royal Red Arabian Horse Show
Regina Exhibition Park
Regina, Saskatchewan, August 19 - 23
Contact: (306)981-9200

80-20 4-H Celebration
Alberta 4-H Centre
Battle Lake, August 23-24, 1997
Linda Rasmuson (403)422-4H4H
e-mail: rasmuso@agric.gov.ab.ca

September

Poultry Research Centre Open House
Edmonton Research Station
Edmonton, September 3
Dr. Frank Robinson (403)492-3234

Richmond Fair
Ontario Fairgrounds
Richmond, Ontario, September 19 - 21
Dale Greene (613)838-3420, Richmond, Ontario
e-mail: mardale@magi.com

Alberta Poultry Service Industry Workshop
Kananaskis Lodge
Kananaskis Country, September 29 - October 1
Narine Singh (403)427-5320

October

Canadian Warmblood Horse Breeders Association
Fall Breeders Classic Sale
Olds Cow Palace
Olds, Alberta, October 11-12, 1997
Christina Kupchenko (403) 343-2423

Fall Renovation & Home Decorating Show
Exhibition Pavilion
Lethbridge, October 16 - 19
Barb Tate (403)328-4491; fax (403)320-8139
e-mail: whoopup@agt.net
Chinook Livestock Classic
Exhibition Pavilion
Lethbridge, October 24 - 25
Twyla Gurr (403)328-4491; fax (403)320-8139
e-mail: whoopup@agt.net

November

Country Christmas Craft Show
Exhibition Pavilion
Lethbridge, November 28 - 29
Barb Tate (403)328-4491; fax (403)320-8139
e-mail: whoopup@agt.net

1998
January

Alberta Horse Breeders and Owners Conference
Capri Centre
Red Deer, January 9 - 11, 1998
Les Burwash (403)948-8532
e-mail: burwash@agric.gov.ab.ca

Banff Pork Seminar
Banff Centre
Banff, January 13 - 16, 1998
Aileen Reilly (403)469-4902, Edmonton
e-mail: reilly@oanet.com

Alberta 4-H Leaders' Conference
Red Deer Lodge
Red Deer, January 16 - 18 1998
Penny Wilkes (403)427-4514
e-mail: wilkes@agric.gov.ab.ca

Whoop-Up Quarter Horse Circuit
Lethbridge & District Exhibition Pavilion
Lethbridge, April 17 - 19, 1998
Twyla Gurr (403)328-4491; fax (403)320-8139

International Triticale Symposium
July 26 - 31, 1998
Red Deer Alberta Canada

Ninth International Wheat Genetics Symposium
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, August 2 - 7, 1998
Pierre Hucl (306)966-8667, Saskatoon, SK; Dr. Doug Knott (306)966-4953, Saskatoon, SK
Internet:
http://www.usask.ca/agriculture/cropsci/winter_wheat/
9th_ iwg s/

Editor's Notes:

Alberta's agricultural colleges conduct a variety of short courses, workshops and seminars throughout the year. Please contact them directly for a list.

Fairview College at (403)835-6605 or e-mail registrar@fairviewc.ab.ca

Lethbridge Community College at (403)320-3311

Olds College (403)556-8355
e-mail for The Connection 73543.2137@compuserve.com

Lakeland College (Vermilion) (403)853-8400

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Coming agricultural events notice

1. Do you know of any provincial (Alberta), national or international agricultural meetings, conferences or conventions coming in 1997 or 1998? Please state the **name** of the event(s):

2. **When** is the event being held?

3. **Where** is the event being held? Include city or town; hotel or convention centre, if known:

4. Please give **name, city or town, and phone number** of a **contact person** for each event listed:

5. This form has been **completed by** what organization? Please include your phone number:

Please return this form by August 22, 1997 to:

Lee Anne Palutke, Agri-News Editor
Communications Division
J.G. O'Donoghue Building
7000 - 113 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T6H 5T6
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"*Coming agricultural events*" **is published quarterly in Agri-News. The next list will be released September 1, 1997.**

CANADIANA

JUL 22 1997

AGRI-NEWS

June 9, 1997

Swath grazing

Interested in saving on feed next winter? Why not consider the practise of swath grazing an annual crop.

"Studies show average feed cost for wintering beef cows are at least a dollar per day, while grazing costs are approximately fifty-cents per day," says Ross Hutchison, crop specialist – forages with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "That's a savings of at least $15 per cow per month. Other benefits include time savings, nutrient recycling, reducing fertilizing requirements, reducing manure spreading, and dry matter losses occurring from harvesting dry feed and feeding are often higher than the losses that occur from grazing."

When practising swath grazing, annual crop such as oats or barley are seeded in late June or early July and swathed mid-September so cows can graze the swaths in late fall and early winter. This is done as an option to harvesting the crop for greenfeed or silage.

"The most common crops used for swath grazing are oats and barley or a mixture of the two," says Hutchison. "The crop that gives the highest dry matter for a given area is generally the one used."

Research work from Lacombe and Melfort Research Station indicate barley, when compared to other spring cereals, will maintain a higher level of digestibility as the crop matures. Winter annuals, such as fall rye, can be included to improve quality. In most cases, fall rye is the most productive of the winter cereals available.

"If a winter cereal is used, seed at 20 to 30 pounds per acre with the spring cereal," says Hutchison. "Smooth awned, late maturing varieties of barley, such as Virdon, Brier, A.C. Lacombe and Argyle, are recommended. Use a forage oat variety such as Foothill, Waldren, A.C. Mustang or other varieties suitable for the area."

Seeding crops for swath grazing in late June or early July means the crop will be swathed in the milk and soft dough stage in mid-September. Late swathing will minimize weathering of the swath. To maintain quality, oats should be swathed late in the milk stage.

"Use the same fertility program commonly used for cereals when seeded for green feed or silage production," adds Hutchison. "Nitrogen can be applied at 30 to 60 pounds per acre with the remaining nutrients applied according to the soil test results. If the same field is being used each year for swath grazing, a reduction in fertilizer can be achieved because of nutrient recycling occurring. Animal grazing returns a major portion of the nitrogen phosphorus, potash and sulphur."

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

This winter, a survey was conducted among experienced swath grazers. The results of the survey will be published later this year. For more information on swath grazing, contact a beef or forage specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

Contact: *Ross Hutchison*
(403)842-7540

Soil temperatures in June

The risk of seeding into colder soil is one of the worries of direct seeding, especially in cooler, wetter areas of Alberta. During 1996, soil temperatures were collected on the Viridian plots at the Red Deer Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative (ARTI) site.

"Only one year of data has been collected on this project, to date and that must be taken into consideration when looking at the information gathered," says Karen Yakimishyn, central region conservation coordinator with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Temperatures were taken at two inch, six inch and 12 inch depths. The two inch depth readings recorded soil temperatures in the seeding zone. Temperatures were taken on both conventionally seeded and direct seeded soil. The conventionally seeded side was worked twice in the fall and once in the spring. Because of the cold, wet weather experienced last spring, both sites were seeded on May 21."

Seed of most major crops grown in Alberta will begin to germinate at temperatures between three and five degrees C. Polish canola is one exception and requires at least five degrees C or better to germinate. At the time of seeding both sites were warm enough for all seeds to germinate.

"The direct seeded soil remained cooler throughout the spring season but did even out around June 18," adds Yakimishyn. "Results also showed that seed in the conventionally direct seeded crop experienced some higher temperatures before this time. The cooler soils under direct seeding can be attributed to the increase in seedbed moisture and lower heat absorption due to residue cover."

Visual comparison between sites did not show any noticeable differences in crop germination. No data was collected on yield.

"More work needs to be done in this area for the black and grey soil zones in the province," says Yakimishyn. "While the information collected last year shows that temperatures did vary, whether this is a factor in production must still be determined."

A more intense study started at the site this spring. The project, overseen by Al Howard, soil moisture specialist with the conservation and development branch, will compare soil temperatures, crop diseases and yields in direct seeded and conventionally seeded soils.

Contact: *Karen Yakimishyn* *Eric Oosterhuis*
(403)340-5325 *(403)340-5325*

Choosing a recreation horse

Over 90 per cent of horses are owned for sport and recreational purposes. The owners of these horses want a horse that will fulfill their requirements for pleasure riding or driving in a safe consistent manner.

"When choosing a horse for recreation, there are some important characteristics that should be considered," says Les Burwash, manager of equine programs with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "By far the most important criteria to look for is a kind temperament or disposition. Many recreational owners don't have sufficient experience or ability to deal with horses that have vices such as kicking or biting, the selection of a horse with an excellent disposition is critical to the safety of the owner. The horse must like people and be willing to put up with the idiosyncrasies and inconsistencies of its owners."

The recreational horse should be sound of sight, limb and wind. Eyes should be large and prominent, setting out on the corner of the head. Horses with impaired vision due to injury or horses that develop cataracts or other eye problems are unsafe and of little use to the recreational owner.

"The 'glass-eyed' horse can have impaired vision because of the eye's sensitivity to bright light," says Burwash. "Horses with small piggy eyes, set down on the side of the face tend to have questionable temperament, no doubt due in part to the impaired vision."

Most horse owners want a horse that can do some physical activities when being ridden or driven. To do this, the horse needs a minimum standard of conformation. This means that the horse will be able to perform at an acceptable level and remain sound of limb when put to work.

"Conformation refers to the correctness of limbs as well as the balance and relative proportion of the head, neck and body," explains Burwash. "The size of the horse should be reasonable for the type of work and size of the rider, also."

Another soundness area of concern is wind. Horses are meant to be athletes. To perform athletic functions, they must be able to take in large quantities of oxygen. Horses should have large open nostrils and be free of heaves or other respiratory aliments that limit their usefulness.

"A recreational horse needs a basic level of training to suit the needs of the owner," adds Burwash. "During basic training, the animal is taught to respond to the riders aids – hands, seat, legs - in a quiet consistent manner. The horse must walk, trot or canter when the rider wants it to. Horses must stop, back-up, turn right and left on request and stand quietly when the rider is mounting and dismounting. These are the bare minimum an owner should consider when choosing a recreational horse."

Safe, reliable and enjoyable are important qualities in a pleasure/recreation horse. Time and money spent to send a horse to an experienced trainer for one to three months so the basics are properly taught is usually a very good investment.

Owning horses for sport and recreation costs money. Potential horse owners need to realize that the purchase price is the cheapest part of owning a horse. Horses that have a minimum level of training and some miles on them will cost more than a young untrained horse. But the cost of putting a horse with a trainer to teach it the basics is most often more costly than buying a horse that is already trained.

"When selecting a recreation horse, potential new owners should get some assistance from an experienced horse person," says Burwash. "With a little advice and assistance, inexperienced horse buyers can avoid many pitfalls and be more confident that the horse purchased will meet their needs."

Contact: Les Burwash
(403)948-8532

Pesticide containers – take them back clean

Take Them Back Clean is the theme of the 1997 Crop Protection Institute of Canada (CPI) campaign to remind farmers and custom applicators to thoroughly rinse and safely dispose of their used pesticide containers.

The CPI's container management program is an industry program funded by crop protection product manufactures. However, it is the combined support of farmers, custom applicators, dealers, contractors, provincial committees, governments and manufactures that has made it a success. The program operates in all provinces and it led the world in 1995 with a recovery rate of 64 per cent of the pesticide containers supplied to the market place. Germany, at 41 per cent, ranked second and the U.S., at 28 per cent, ranked third.

In Alberta, over 989,000 pesticide containers were collected from 99 municipally operated container sites in 1996, an increase of 86,000 over 1995.

"Cleanliness of containers is a key issue in recycling containers," says David Pledger, of the pesticide management branch, Alberta Container Management Committee.

To improve program performance, CPI commissioned a survey of 457 farmers and 151 custom applicators, including 31 aerial applicators, in the prairie provinces during July and August, 1996, to determine their pesticide container return and rinsing practices.

"Results of this survey showed that of those interviewed, 99 per cent of the custom applicators and 97 per cent of the farmers said they were able to rinse the containers where they filled their sprayer," says Pledger. "The survey also estimated that 85 per cent of the containers taken to a container site had been triple/pressure rinsed."

An Alberta Environmental Protection survey of containers at container sites in 1996, however, suggested that only 72 per cent of containers were rinsed. In addition, over 17,000 litres of liquid pesticide, adjuvant and rinsate collected at container sited required disposal.

"The 1997 awareness campaign focuses on thoroughly rinsing pesticide containers before taking them to the collection site," adds Pledger. "The Alberta Container Management Committee is asking pesticide users to do the right thing and *Take Them Back Clean*. Pesticide residue can be removed more easily by rinsing containers immediately after emptying. Triple rinsing (or pressure rinsing) will ensure all the product you paid for goes where it belongs – protecting the crop"

Clean and drained containers:

- are safer to handle;
- cost less to process and to dispose of liquid pesticide and rinsate from containers;
- reduce container site liability concerns; and,
- increase opportunities for recycling.

Municipally operated container site locations around the province are listed in the ***1997 Crop Protection with Chemicals*** *(Blue Book* – available from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development offices) and the 1997 edition of the ***Pesticide Quick Reference***. Information on site locations can also be obtained by contacting the local agriculture fieldman, any office of the Pesticide Management Branch, or the Action on Waste Recycle Information Line 1-800-463-6326.

Contact: David Pledger
(403)297-8262

Water licensing for well water

An adequate supply of water is critical for any livestock operation. It's important to protect individual rights to this supply.

"Ground water is a renewable, but limited resource," says Ken Williamson. "In Alberta, the management and allocation of water falls under the *Water Resources Act*. This Act will soon be replaced by the *Water Act*, not yet proclaimed. The water licensing process is administered by Alberta Environmental Protection. A licence applicant must prove that the water supply will be adequate for their needs and that their use of the water will not have an unreasonable impact on other water users."

Most small farm operations are considered domestic or household users and don't need a licence. Currently, licences are required for livestock operations with more than: 150 head of mature cattle and/or horses; 100 sows (farrow to finish); 1000 feeder pigs; 5000 poultry; 200 mature sheep; or water requirements of over 3000 gallons per day for mixed farming.

"These guidelines will change when the new *Water Act* is proclaimed," says Williamson. "Any water use beyond household use can be licensed or registered for *traditional agriculture users*."

The proposed cut off point for household use is 1250 cubic meters per year, this averages out to about 750 gallons per day. Any use beyond this should be registered or licensed. Traditional agriculture users may be able to register an additional 6250 cubic meters per year for their existing operations. The registration process is not yet in place.

"If a farm has been operating for many years, has higher livestock numbers than those listed, has a well that was drilled before September 1993, and the water supply has not been a problem, a licence can often be processed without major cost or effort," adds Williamson. "It's just a matter of documenting the past and present water use and applying for the licence."

For new and expanding operations, applicants must prove that there is sufficient water to meet requirements and not have an unreasonable effect on neighbouring water users. An exploration permit must be applied for first. If the permit is granted, the well can be drilled and tested. A hydrogeological consultant must be hired to analyze the data, assess any impact on neighbouring water users, and prepare a report that meets the requirements of Alberta Environmental Protection. Depending on the size of the project, the cost of the report may range from $3,000 to $10,000 to prepare.

"Once the licence is issued, it basically puts a producer's name on the amount of water licensed," says Williamson. "Only household users, or holders of older licences, will have a higher priority. New, competing water users will have to prove that their water use will not interfere with the supply to existing licence holders."

Licences for water from wells are processed by Alberta Environmental Protection regional offices in Edmonton, Red Deer, Leduc, and Calgary.

Contact: *Ken Williamson*
(403)340-5324

Agri-News Briefs

Sugar calms the nerves

Sugar is found in all fruits and vegetables and is appreciated as a flavor enhancer. Canadians currently consume an average of 15 kg each year. During the past two decades, sugar was viewed cautiously by many – its reputation tied to behaviour changes, health concerns and tooth decay. Throughout this time, researchers conducted many studies to discover the exact effect of sugar consumption and those studies haven't validated the concerns. As recently as February 1994, the New England Journal of Medicine published research that showed sugar had no effect on children's behaviour, even in large amounts. The study looked at diets with three types of sweeteners: sucrose, aspartame and saccharin. Parents and children were unaware of which sweeteners were used in their diet. The result: no effect. In fact, research suggests that sugar can exert a mildly calming affect after consumption. For more information, contact Suzanne Tenold, agri-food development consultant with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (403)948-8504.

Just Facts

The Canadian Cattlemen's Association recently updated ***Just Facts***. The publication addresses issues concerning cattle production, the role of beef cattle in the environment, sustainability, and beef as a healthy food. Copies are available from the CCA, call toll free 1-800-381-5546. In Calgary, call 275-4400.

Foothills and mountain flowers field trip

The education division of the Devonian Botanic Garden is offering a weekend tour of the rolling forested hills and clear lakes north of Hinton to gardeners interested in native plants and flowers. Participants will meet at 7:00 p.m. at the Blue Lake Adventure Centre on Friday, June 20 for general get acquainted and a foothills flowers slide presentation, just to break the ice. Saturday will be spent exploring the scenic trails near the Centre to find wood lilies, twinflowers, bunchberries, bluebells, primroses and Labrador tea. The area is prime territory for orchids such as calypso's, ladies tresses and bog orchids. Sunday's activities include hiking the alpine ridge of the Cardinal Divide Natural Area south of Hinton searching for the many rare plants that are only found in this part of the province. Accommodation is available at the Blue Lake Adventure Centre, just north of Hinton. Registration fee for the weekend is $95, accommodation and meals are extra. Transportation is the responsibility of the participants For more information or to register, contact the Garden at (403)987-2064.

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AGRI-NEWS

June 16, 1997

All grain mold is not Fusarium head blight

In some parts of Alberta, producers and elevator operators are confused about spring-combined moldy grain.

"The mold on spring harvested grain, whether wheat, barley, oats or rye, is not in anyway related to the Fusarium head blight of barley or Tombstone disease of wheat that are problems in southern Manitoba," says Dr. Ieuan Evans, plant disease specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

Mold on grain surface is made up of a great many species of mostly harmless fungi. These fungi may be similar to the mold on the outside of hay or straw bales. These molds can reduce the feed value of grain and make them less palatable to livestock. Generally they are rarely if ever toxic to livestock.

"In a study done by the Alberta Research Council of Vegreville over 10 years ago, thousands of samples of overwintered grain were tested and none of the samples were found to be toxic to livestock," says Evans. "If grain is ripe in the swath, aside from the poor appearance, it can still be healthy enough to germinate. If on the other hand, frost hit the immature (green) crop before swathing, the frozen grain may have little feed value."

If producers have any doubts about the possibility of toxins being present in the grain, remember that hogs are much more sensitive than cattle. If producers really need to be assured about the absence of toxins, a representative grain sample should be sent for testing (free of charge) to Randy Clear at the Canadian Grain Commission (CGC), 1404 - 303 Main Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 3G8.

"A properly collected, randomized representative sample of the harvested grain must be sent for testing, **not** a collection of unusually discolored hand-picked seeds," says Evans.

"Toxins in Alberta grain is a very rare occurrence. The Fusarium head blight disease that plagues standing cereal crops in Manitoba and the U.S. is also a very rare occurrence here in Alberta."

Producers wishing extra verification should note that the CGC will test any cereal for deoxynivalenol (DON), also known as vomitoxin. This testing costs $53.50 per sample, including GST. Cheques should be made payable to the Receiver General of Canada. The test will determine the DON level in the grain.

Samples must be sent in paper or cloth envelopes to: Canadian Grain Commission – Vomitoxin Testing, 846 - 303 Main Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 3G8. The sample size should be 1000

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grams (1 kg) or 2.2 pounds. If samples are being submitted for vomitoxin and grade analysis, then two separate envelopes of 1000 grams each should be sent. Include: the producers name, type of grain, sample identification and where the crop was grown, and the producer's address and postal code.

Results will be mailed back to the producer, but the producer may telephone for results (204)983-3359.

For specific information, see the factsheet, ***Fusarium Head Blight of Barley and Wheat*** Agdex 110/632-1, updated in November 1996, available from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district offices and the publication office, main floor, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6.

Contact: Dr. Ieuan Evans Gary Berger
(403)427-7098 403)675-2252

The good, the bad and the ugly ... May weather

Albertan's were enjoying warm dry weather and thinking summer during the first half of May. Then, shades of winter returned as cool arctic air combined with moisture from the Pacific, brought 20 to 40 mm of mixed rain and heavy snow.

"The storms hit northern Alberta between May 17 and 24 and central and southern Alberta between May 20 and 26," says Peter Dzikowski, agri-weather resource specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The heavy rain and snow delayed field operations and caused damage to deciduous trees and buildings."

Snow storms between May 17 and 26 increased precipitation amounts to above normal levels. The provincial average precipitation of 56.2 mm was 8.3 mm above the 1961 to 1990 average of 47.9 mm.

"The southern region was the wettest part of Alberta with well above normal precipitation, which was needed after a dry April," says Dzikowski. "The Peace region also received above normal precipitation. The north west region reported below normal precipitation while the central and north east regions reported near normal precipitation. Amounts of 13 to 128 mm, or 38 to 294 per cent of normal were reported. May is usually the fourth wettest month of the year."

Pincher Creek reported the greatest precipitation departure, receiving 208.2 mm of precipitation or 294 per cent of normal. Rocky Mountain House reported the greatest temperature departure, 1.9 degrees below the monthly average of 9.0 degrees for May.

The provincial average temperature was 0.4 degrees below the 1961 to 1990 average of 10.2 degrees C. Alberta locations reported monthly average temperatures ranging from near normal to two degrees below normal. These averages are based on data recorded at 49 Environment Canada climate stations across Alberta.

"Temperatures improved to above normal the last few days of May," adds Dzikowski. "Provincial growing degree days were about 94 per cent of normal which is about one to two days behind."

The Environment Canada temperature anomaly forecast for June, 1997 is for below normal temperatures for Alberta. For more weather and climate information visit the Internet site at http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/climate/index.html

Contact: Peter Dzikowski
(403)422-4385

Swath grazing annual crops

Experience of producers and researchers shows that the best cereal varieties to plant for swath grazing are those that are high yielding seed varieties. Except in the case of the dwarf varieties, high yielding grain varieties generally produce high forage yields.

"A majority of producers use barley and/or oats for swath grazing," says Ross Hutchison, crop specialist – forages with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Producers find there are fewer problems with sores in the cattle's mouths if smooth-awned barley varieties are used. Rough-awned barley spears can lodge in their mouths and cause problems."

Other crops worth trying are spring seeded fall rye or winter and spring triticale. The advantage of winter triticale or fall rye in the mix is it remains in the stand over winter. In the first year, the cows will graze it first before starting on the swaths. Early the following spring, the fall crops are available for spring grazing when the cattle are turned out to clean up any swath residue.

"Seeding of the cereal crop takes place in late June to early July," says Hutchison. "By delaying the time of seeding, the crop will be at the right stage of maturity for swathing. An alternative is to look for varieties that have a longer maturity time."

Seeding rates should be higher by 25 per cent than those used for grain production. The higher seeding rate is important in areas where the plants may have reduced tillering due to heat and drought stress. When mixing winter cereals with spring crops, include the winter crop at about 20 pounds per acre. When mixing barley and oats, vary seeding rate according to the amount of each you want in the stand.
(Refer to Adgex FS 133/20-1 ***Winter Cereals for Pasture***).

The normal rates of fertilizer used for other cereal crops may be adequate. A soil test or using the Alberta Fertilizer Guide can help determine an appropriate fertilizer rate. Soil tests are important in determining the optimum levels of potassium, copper and sulfur to include with levels of nitrogen fertilizer.

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"Large excesses of nitrogen fertilizer can encourage the buildup of nitrates in feed if weather conditions favour nitrate buildup," says Hutchison. "Grab samples of the swath can be taken to determine the level of nitrates present if weather conditions have been correct for a buildup. Feed containing high nitrates, greater than 0.5 to one per cent, need to be fed on a controlled basis. This level of nitrates should only be present in the case of severe drought prior to swathing or if the crop is left to stand after a killing frost." (Refer to Agdex FS 400/60-1 ***Nitrate Poisoning & Feeding High Nitrate Feeds***).

Perennial weeds are easier to control under a swath grazing system. Delayed seeding allows time for a herbicide pre-seed burn off to be done to help control these weeds. To control annual weeds, use recommended herbicides but be sure to check the label on the herbicide container. Most chemicals have grazing and feeding restrictions, established to ensure safety for animals and producers and should be followed as outlined.

"The barley crop should be swathed at the soft dough stage and the oat crop at the milk stage," adds Hutchison. "This stage of maturity ensures a high quality feed. To reduce the risk of a nitrate buildup, swath the crop before the first killing frost or immediately after. If the crop becomes too ripe before swathing, cows will be more interested in eating the heads which can result in grain overload and leaves only straw to consume later. This results in a feed that doesn't meet the nutritional requirements of the animal."

Mature crops damaged by hail or frost can be salvaged but should also be tested to ensure that nutritional value will meet the needs of cattle.

A number of excellent publications are available on the use of annual crops for swath grazing. Contact an Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development office for information.

Contact: Ross Hutchison
(403)842-7540

4-H Beef Heifer Show

One of 4-H's most popular programs takes place July 13 to 15, 1997. The 21st annual Provincial 4-H Beef Heifer Show is being held at the Bashaw Agricultural Society Grounds.

"Entries have increased to the point where the program fills up every year," says Henry Wiegman, 4-H agriculture specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "There are 280 kids registered with 280 head of livestock. Total entries, in all classes and categories, is about 1350."

The 4-H members entered represent 71 clubs, which is 30 per cent of all beef clubs throughout the province. Activities include judging, team grooming, breed classes, interbreed conformation, herdsmanship competition, project bowl contest, showmanship, freshman classes, and information sessions.

The United Farmers of Alberta (UFA), Alberta Treasury Branches, Bashaw Agriculture Society and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development are dedicated supporters of this event. Spectators are more than welcome. Event times are 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. on Sunday; 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Monday; and 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday.

Contact: Henry Wiegman
(403)427-4532

Red Deer direct seeding site

The Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative's (ARTI) Red Deer direct seeding site is entering its second year. The site, located one kilometre west of the Highway 2 and 32 Street (C&E Trail) intersection, just a few minutes west of Red Deer College, is now open for self-guided tours and has a special tour day on June 26, 1997.

"The large size demonstration plots of five acres and up, are designed to give farmers and agribusiness an opportunity to look at direct seeding technology," says Peter Gamache, ARTI program manager. "The heart of the demo is a 58 acre plot of canola comparing direct and conventional seeding. It was seeded on May 8 by Wayne Cressey, local farmer and member of the Rainy Creek Conservation Club, using his Concord air drill."

Agrium, DowElanco, Westco and the Lacombe Research Centre each have five acre plots. They feature: opener and fertilizer placement, nitrogen rates, anhydrous ammonia, surface applied granular herbicides, weed control, timing of weed removal, legume inoculants, disease control, seeding depth, soil temperature studies and new products. The County of Red Deer has a pocket gopher control demonstration and Ducks Unlimited has a 20 acre delayed hay and wetlands project. Monsanto also has its 40 acre demonstration farm on the same quarter featuring direct seeding, products such as Avadex and Roundup and new technology.

"June 26 is the special tour day," adds Gamache. "Events get underway at 9:30 a.m., with tours starting at 10:00 a.m. and every 30 minutes throughout the day until 4:00 p.m. Company representatives and specialists will be on hand to answer questions. If June 26 isn't convenient, the site is open everyday for self-guided tours. A map and brochure of the site can be picked up at the registration box. Those who fill in the registration form and deposit it in the box will be eligible to win a GPS receiver.

Contact: Peter Gamache
(403)427-3361

Eric Oosterhuis
(403)340-5325

Westerner continues to support Provincial 4-H Dairy Show

Outstanding 4-H members will exhibit the top Alberta Dairy projects at the 51st Provincial 4-H Dairy show. This year's event will be held July 18 and 19, 1997 at the Red Deer Westerner Exposition.

"We are expecting between 75-90 participants and 20 leaders" says Henry Wiegman, Provincial 4-H Agriculture Specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

All Alberta 4-H dairy project members, nine to 20 years of age, are eligible to compete in the judging and clipping competitions at the provincial show. However, members competing in the conformation and showmanship classes have advanced to the provincial show from the club level.

The Dairy Industry and the Red Deer Westerner Exposition are major sponsors of the Provincial show. "The provincial dairy show is such a long standing success because of the dedication and commitment of our sponsors," adds Wiegman. In total there are over 40 sponsors whose continued involvement is appreciated.

Members gain experience competing at a provincial level. They are encouraged to broaden their knowledge of the dairy industry, to share their skills with others and to promote awareness of the 4-H dairy project.

For further information please call or write to the provincial 4-H office, #200, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta
T6H 5T6.

Contact: *Henry Wiegman* *(403)427-4532*
Robyn Bilsky *(403)427-4462*

Gray mold in dry bean and lentil crops

Gray mold, caused by the pathogen *Botrytis cinerea*, has become an important disease of dry beans and lentils in southern Alberta. The disease attacks roots of young seedlings causing seedling blight and it can attack stems, leaves and pods of mature plants. Severe losses in seed yield and seed quality can be caused by high incidence of the disease in the field.

"During the late 1970's and early 1980's, disease survey records showed that gray mold was inconspicuous on dry beans, dry peas and fababeans in Alberta," says Gordon Frank, with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The disease was not considered to be an economic threat to these crops. However, surveys conducted in 1993 to 1995 now show that gray mold is the second most important disease of dry beans, next only to white mold caused by sclerotinia fungus."

Gray mold has also been found to be of significant importance in lentils in southern Alberta. In 1995, gray mold of dry beans was found in 83 per cent of fields surveyed and was severe in 17 per cent of the surveyed fields. Gray mold of lentils was found in all fields surveyed and was severe in 36 per cent of fields.

"Gray mold is widespread in the dry bean production area, especially between Grassy Lake and Bow Island and in the lentil production area, the black soil zone, between New Dayton and Warner," says Frank.

In addition to infecting dry beans and lentils, gray mold can attack other field crops such as dry peas, safflower and sunflower.

"To reduce losses from gray mold, producers are advised to use clean seed of dry beans and lentils, free of sclerotial bodies or the pathogen, and to grow non-host crops such as cereals in rotation with susceptible crops," adds Frank. "Studies are being done to screen dry bean germplasm for resistance to gray mold. These studies, being done at the Lethbridge Research Centre, will be used in developing new dry bean cultivars with improved resistance to the disease.

Contact: *Gordon Frank*
(403)362-1212

Yellowheaded Spruce Sawfly

If the needles on your spruce tree start mysteriously disappearing in June, it may be the work of the Yellowheaded Spruce Sawfly.

"The damage begins with only parts of the new tender needles being eaten away," says Shelley Barkley, information officer with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development at the Crop Diversification Centre-South, Brooks. "At the pest grows, so does its appetite. Eventually, it will eat whole needles and work its way back to old growth."

Other characteristics of an infected tree are shabby appearance and a yellowish brown colour. In an excessive attack trees can be stripped of all their needles.

"Sawfly attacks can result in the death of trees," says Barkley. "Repeated attacks weaken trees, making them more susceptible to other factors like adverse weather conditions."

When looking for this pest on spruce trees, begin with the trees that were attacked last year, as the sawfly are likely to attack the same tree repeatedly. Also the south, southwest or southeast facing side of the tree is where they are found most often, but not exclusively.

Seeing this insect before it causes sever damage is part of the problem. When newly hatched, they are caterpillar-like and yellowish-green in colour. They have a yellow or green head. Mature insects are two centimeters long with either a yellow or red head. The body is green with grey-green stripes running from head to tail and they are waxy looking. The Yellowheaded

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Spruce Sawfly is well camouflaged and looks a lot like the needles it eats. Feeding stops in mid-July as the larvae drop to the ground. There, they spin a cocoon in the soil to spend the winter.

"Controlling this insect is quite simple," adds Barkley. "Hand picking is one option. Hosing the larva off the tree with water is another. Malathion and permethrin are two chemical control options. The biggest trick to controlling this insect is seeing it."

Contact:Shelley Barkley
(403)362-1300

Soil and crop diagnostic field school

A soil and crop diagnostic field school is being held at the Lethbridge Research Centre in late June and early July. The school is a collaborative effort of both Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development staff. This is the first time a diagnostic field school has been conducted at the Centre.

"The field school is being established to teach hands-on soil and crop diagnostic techniques to government and industry agronomists as well as farmers to help them identify problems associated with today's crop production systems," says Dr. Ross McKenzie, with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "This year, the field school will focus on agronomic production issues of wheat and canola under both dryland and irrigated conditions. In 1998, the field school will focus on barley, winter wheat and forages. In 1999, special crop production will be the focus of the field school."

Fertilizing and seeding of the 1997 Southern Alberta Soil and Crop Diagnostic Field School, located at the Lethbridge Research Centre, has been completed and plans for the school are progressing well. Over 500 uniquely different plots have been seeded to demonstrate crop production techniques and problems.

"The field school has a number of corporate sponsors including Agrium, Cargill, DowElanco, Gustafson, Westco and the Alberta Wheat Pool," says McKenzie. "Each have booked their own training sessions for their staff."

Three separate days: June 26, July 4 and July 7, 1997, have been set aside for individuals to go through the field school. Cost of the one-day training is $120, which includes handout materials, lunch, refreshments and GST. Each day, the tour group will gather at the large tent at the Diagnostic Field School at 8:30 a.m., with the training starting promptly at 9:00 a.m The site is located southwest of the Lethbridge Research Centre's main building, south of the Goal Road. The tour will run from 9:00 a.m. to approximately 4:00 p.m.

The training modules included in the school are:

- Soils and fertilizers
- Seed quality and seeding issues
- Weed control and herbicides
- Insect identification and crop damage
- Plant diseases
- Soil salinity
- Wheat and canola varieties, and
- Special crop varieties

"The last hour of the field school will examine a number of case-studies with both wheat and canola to practice and develop diagnostic skills in a field setting," adds McKenzie.

For more information or to register for the 1997 Southern Alberta Soil and Crop Field Diagnostic School, contact Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's agronomy unit in Lethbridge at (403)381-5126.

Contact: Dr. Ross McKenzie
(403)381-5842

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Agri-News Briefs

Ram Test Station sale

The 1997 Alberta Ram Test Station sale is on Saturday, June 21, 1997, one week earlier than the sale is usually held, at the Olds Cow Palace. Performance-tested Suffolk and Dorset ram lambs and Rambouillet yearling rams will be in the Cow Palace by 9:00 a.m. and the sale will start at 1:00 p.m. At 10:00 a.m., a seminar *Reproductive Soundness in Rams* by Dr. Brian Buckrell of the Ontario Veterinary College, is featured. Dr. Buckrell is a researcher in sheep reproduction. His team developed the transcervical method of artificial insemination in sheep. He also operates Ontario's only semen collection facility. The seminar is open to sheep producers and veterinarians. Sheep producers can bring their wool to the sale for pickup by the Canadian Cooperative Wool Growers. A lunchtime lamb barbecue by the Mountain View Sheep Producers will be available. For more information, contact Mike Rieberger (403)224-3743 or Cathy Gallivan (403)224-3962.

Alberta Pool reports seeding progress

Snow and rain in May delayed seeding in several areas of Alberta. The Pool reports that soil moisture conditions have improved and in the southern areas the recent precipitation was much needed. Good seeding progress was made by the end of May with 70 per cent of the province-wide crops seeded. This percentage is ahead of the 48 per cent completed by May 31 last year and the 10-year average of 42 per cent. Seeding is 94 to 99 per cent completed in most of the southern regions. The south Peace area reported the least acreage seeded by the end of May at only 15 per cent. Seeding in northern Alberta and the Peace regions could require favorable weather well into June to finish seeding. For further information, contact the Alberta Wheat Pool (403)460-3400.

Check out the bison advantage

Producers can check out the bison advantage at the Alberta Bison Association's 1997 Convention, June 27 to 29 at Lakeland College, Vermilion. The convention features presentations on bison nutrition and feeding, reproduction and feedlot management, as well as advertising and promoting your bison business. Keynote speaker, Dick Dawson will discuss world trends on the marketing, trade and economics of red meat. The convention kicks off Friday evening with a pitchfork fondue, Native Storytellers and Hoop Dancers. Educational sessions begin Saturday, June 28 at 9:00 a.m. in the Alumni Hall, with tours of bison farms around Vermilion being held on Sunday, June 29. The convention is open to all ABA members and other interested individuals. To register, or for further information, contact Laurie Ferenee at (403)724-2215 or Shannon Boddy (403)724-2719.

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AGRI-NEWS

June 23, 1997

Animal Health Information Network

The world is shrinking. International trade agreements are making it possible to purchase goods from distant countries as if they were next door neighbours.

Even when doing business with neighbours, people want to know that they are getting high quality and safe products. Trading partners need guarantees that Canadian products meet international standards, especially in the agricultural livestock market where disease is an important concern.

"The federal government is responsible for controlling and protecting against diseases that are rare or never found in Canada, but if imported would devastate Canada's livestock industry," says Dr. Cornelia Kreplin, acting head of Animal Health Laboratories with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Meanwhile, the provinces collect information about more common diseases that could impact trade negotiations and share their findings to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency."

Both federal and provincial programs need to collect solid and indisputable scientific data to show that livestock from Canada meets international animal health standards. Alberta responded to this need for information by creating the Animal Health Information Network (AHIN).

> ***"Alberta is taking a lead role in demonstrating that Canada's livestock industry constantly meets or surpasses international standards for exportation. Programs such as the Animal Health Information Network compile the necessary scientific research that shows our livestock meet animal health standards. This type of initiative will secure Alberta's place in the international livestock market."***
>
> ***Hon. Ed Stelmach, Alberta Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development***

The AHIN collects data from several sources. One method is monitoring records of diseases diagnosed in individual animals by private and public veterinary laboratories. Another method of data collection uses a formal sampling plan that provides a more complete picture of disease in Alberta's livestock. Information that shows incidence or geographic distribution of disease will help veterinarians and producers protect livestock, design preventative programs, and increase production efficiency.

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
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AHIN is guided by a steering committee that incorporates the diverse research and administrative backgrounds of 10 people. Dr. Cornelia Kreplin, the committee chair, has been instrumental in the design and implementation of AHIN. She describes the program as an "insurance policy against non-tariff barriers."

"For the industry to declare that Alberta livestock is healthy, and safe for human consumption, we need documentation that backs our claim," states Kreplin. "Strong documentation will strengthen Alberta's position in the international market, and allow expansion into growing markets."

Currently, the Alberta pork industry has an opportunity to fill the gap in Japan's market that resulted after an outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease shut down exportation of pork from Taiwan. In these circumstances, disease-free pork is an especially sought after commodity.

In the future, AHIN will expand its focus on animal health issues to include quality assurance, meat hygiene and production information. Kreplin predicts that Canada will join other countries and contribute collections of analysed data to an international database. This type of database is important because as international trade expands, the chance of spreading disease increases. Countries need to work together and diligently monitor disease to maintain the vigour of the international livestock market.

Contact: Cornelia Kreplin
(403) 427-6406

4-H Partners Team receives Premier's Award of Excellence

The Silver Award was presented to the 4-H Partners Team at the recent 3rd Annual Premier's Award of Excellence ceremonies in Edmonton. This award honours those employees demonstrating superior customer service and business practices in a supportive work environment.

1997 marks the 80th anniversary of Alberta 4-H. The program continues to be recognized as a dynamic rural youth program. Despite significant reductions in government funding, the 4-H Partners Team continues to develop new projects, expand provincial programs and improve educational materials to meet the needs of the future leaders of the Alberta agricultural community. "The 4-H branch was able to survive a 30% budget reduction, without comprises in program quality, because our 4-H partners helped make it happen," says Mahlon Weir, head of the 4-H branch. "Our budget process used to be confidential. We opened the books to our partners. As a result, the 4-H community shared in the solution. After all, 4-H belongs to the community," adds Weir.

The 4-H Partners Team is made up of 4-H staff from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, members of the Alberta 4-H Council and the 4-H Foundation of Alberta. The positive working relationship among the three Partners ensures the program will continue to surpass the expectations of its clients.

Contact: Mahlon Weir
(403)427-4463

FBMI update

It's now easier to access funding from the Canada/Alberta Farm Business Management Initiative (FBMI).

"Recently approved administrative changes have reduced the paperwork required and shortened the timelines involved in getting a project proposal approved," says Nan Bartlett, FBMI program representative in Fairview.

FBMI provides funds to private and public sector agencies, colleges, farm organizations and clubs interested in offering farm business management training to people involved in the agriculture industry. This training can take the form of workshops, conferences, consulting, Internet or other types of distance education.

"Beginning immediately, project proposals will be accepted anytime throughout the year," says Bartlett. "Proposals requesting less than $2,500 in FBMI funds will be considered as soon as they are received by the provincial coordinator and the project leader will be notified immediately. Proposals requesting over $2,500 in FBMI funds will be reviewed during the last week of the month in which they are received. Project leaders will be notified during the first week of the next month."

Programs can now be offered throughout the year. "Many farmers and ranchers are looking for training during July and August when they have less work on the farm. The new approval process allows for flexibility in running programs," adds Bartlett.

Once a project is approved, the paperwork involved in managing the project is also reduced. Most projects will require fewer forms for registration and evaluation of the project. This makes it much easier for small agencies and producer clubs to organize an FBMI funded program.

For more information on the Canada/Alberta FBMI, contact one of the program representatives. In south/central Alberta, phone Craig Smith (403)626-3448, fax (403)626-3461; in the northwest and northeast, contact Arla Trueblood (403)954-3745 (phone and fax); in the Peace region, Nan Bartlett (403)835-4288, fax (403)835-2899.

Contact: Nan Bartlett
(403)835-4288

Alberta agriculture is so much more

Southern Alberta's agricultural diversity will be centre stage for delegates of the 11th International Farm Management Congress meeting this July in Calgary. Two of the five days of the Congress are spent on field trips as delegates travel throughout the area, getting a first-hand look at farming and agri-business in action.

"We are showcasing businesses," says Ted Ford, one of the organizers of the field trips. "The field trips will focus on commercial production."

There are nine field trips organized through the IFMC, as well as two more for members of the American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers who are holding their summer meeting concurrently with the International Congress.

"One of the tours on the first day is dedicated to agricultural marketing," says Ford. "Delegates will tour the Calgary Stockyards Ltd. and see the TEAM (the electronic auction market) in action. A fantasy sale will be operated with the delegates bidding."

Delegates will then head to the Alberta Wheat Pool's Grain Academy. The grain academy has information about grain transportation and trade. Following that, the tour visits a feedlot, which acquires feedlot inputs and markets the cattle.

A market garden with a diverse approach to marketing is next. A pick-your-own operation that sells directly at their site and sells at farmers' markets. There is also a commercial kitchen on-site. It is a small scale, successful operation.

"There is also an operation that has a unique method of selling dried flowers in the tour list," says Ford. "The owner teaches courses on dried flower arrangements and through that develops customers for the product."

The tour winds up at a farmers' market in Calgary, where delegates can see the wide variety of agricultural products for sale.

"We want to show that there's high-tech and hands-on marketing in Alberta, all going on at the same time," adds Ford.

On the Friday field trips, delegates will be split up into five tours ranging from crop, horticulture and dairy productions to agricultural processing. There is also a tour for specialty livestock such as rhea and elk.

"The tours end at Olds College," says Ford. "At Olds, delegates will tour the facilities, including the hay compressors, the teaching greenhouse and the sheep, hog and horse facilities. They'll also get a look at the research in composting."

To give a presence of young people in agriculture, the evening program includes 4-H members. One of the presentations is a nine-year old girl speaking on what agriculture means to her.

In all, the 10 field trips will show a cross-section of Canadian agriculture, from production to marketing and final product, to an international audience.

Contact: Ted Ford
(403)556-4218

Margaret Anne Stroh
(403)220-6229

4-H Conservation Camp saluted for environmental excellence

4-H Conservation Camp was honored at the 6th Annual Emerald Awards ceremony in Calgary. The Foundation works to celebrate the achievements of Albertans who are champions of the environment.

The Alberta Emerald Foundation recognizes that today's youth will be our environmental stewards of the future. Certain groups dedicate themselves to bringing information to the next generation. They not only cultivate a respect for the environment, but a desire to actively enhance and protect it.

"Conservation Camp has been unique to the 4-H program for 32 years," says Carol Sullivan, provincial 4-H communications and marketing specialist. "The setting for the Camp is the scenic Alberta 4-H Centre at Battle Lake near Westerose. Led by a team of industry and government experts, 4-Hers explore the diverse ecosytems. They gain practical knowledge on topics of soils, water, fish and wildlife, range management and forestry. At the end of the week everyone participates in a mock environmental hearing judged by the field experts.

"Conservation Camp is designed to show youth the complexity of making real-life environmental decisions. During the role-playing they apply the information they learn. After the camp ends, we encourage them to take the conservation message into their local clubs and communities."

The camper who best spreads the conservation message after attending camp receives the Grant MacEwan Conservation Award. The 1997 recipient is Jessica Belair of the Gibbons Light Horse 4-H Club. Both Sullivan and Belair accepted certificates on behalf of the hundreds of 4-H members who have participated in Conservation Camp. This year's camp sponsored by Alberta Power Limited and Shell Canada Limited, will take place August 17 to 22.

Contact: Carol Sullivan
(403)427-4499

It's spraying time again

Into each farms life a little spray must fall. Agrochemicals have many beneficial properties, but it must be remembered that they are or can be toxic. Handling chemicals safely is worth the extra time to take precautions.

"There is a lot of helpful information available to help farmers stay safe when handling chemicals," says Solomon Kyeremanteng, head of farm safety with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "It is very important that all family members know about safe chemical handling, adults and children."

Safe Handling of Agrochemicals – a Module for Farm Families is a publication put out by the Centre for Agricultural Medicine, University of Saskatchewan that outlines many safety precautions that farm families will find easy to do and easy to follow. Chemical compounds have become a part of everyday life in homes and at work. Simple things such as reading labels for application or handling instructions is easy to do and is very important.

"Label instructions usually list what protective equipment should be worn or used when working with a chemical, what the possible health effects could be and the instructions list emergency first aid treatment," says Kyeremanteng. "Reducing the risk by promoting good management and safety practices is one of the main goals of publications and information pieces such as this."

The publication includes sections on classes of chemicals; how chemicals enter the body; special precautions; respirators; daily laundering instructions; children; cleaning protective equipment; spill response; chemical storage; minimizing exposure; and, a handy checklist before spraying.

Copies of this publication and others on farm safety are available from the Farm Safety Program, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, (403)427-2171.

"Safety is a great habit. After all, a safe farm is a great place to grow."

Contact: Solomon Kyeremanteng
(403)427-4227

Agri-News Briefs

What the 1996 Census said

The 1996 Census results are now being released. There were 276,548 farms in Canada on May 14, 1996. The number of farms has been declining over the past 55 years. However, the decline since the 1991 Census was the smallest ever between censuses. While the overall numbers were down, farms have been getting bigger. For example, those with gross farm receipts of $100,000 or more accounted for 30.2 per cent of all farms in 1996, double the proportion in 1981. The livestock herd increased in the east, but gains in western Canada were even stronger. Farmers diversified their crops in response to export markets and a broader range of consumer demands. Gross farm receipts increased significantly between 1990 and 1995, outpacing the rise in operating expenses. Receipts were up 21.2 per cent, compared to 16.9 per cent for operating expenses.

Per capita food consumption

Canadian eating habits of are changing, says a StatsCan report. Per capita meat consumption fell to its lowest in 20 years in 1996. Last year, each Canadian ate less than 90 kilograms of meat – beef, pork and poultry – down 2 kilograms per person from five years ago. Other protein sources, cheese, cereals, pulses and nuts, are making up some of the difference. While cheese consumption held fairly steady over the last five year, the 10.7 kg consumed per person in 1996 was 56 per cent higher than two decades ago. The consumption of cheddar has almost doubled and Canadians have developed a taste for other varieties of cheeses. Each Canadian also consumed almost 14 litres of frozen dairy products such as ice cream, sherbet, iced milk and milkshakes in 1996. Consumption has remained constant for these types of products with many people turning to the lower fat varieties. Milk consumption has continued to shrink since the early 1980s and consumers have shifted to lower fat varieties. In 1996, each Canadian consumed just over 88 litres of fluid milk. Last year, Canadians drank nearly 75 litres of alcohol each, down from almost 86 litres five years ago. Beer is still the most popular drink. Wine consumption, although below the level in the 1980s, rebounded in 1996.

Outstanding Alberta Gardens

The Devonian Botanic Garden (DBG), located just one half hour west of Edmonton, is looking for avid gardeners to take a selection of free plants for hardiness trials in Alberta Participants will be asked to document where the plants were planted, full sun, partial shade, full shade, and keep track of the plants' growth. The following year a report on the plants' hardiness is sent to the Garden along with information on the size of the plant, whether or not it flowered, and other aspects of note. For more information on the program, contact Gordon Nielson at the Garden (403)987-2064. Also, the DBG is searching for gardens to include in a book on beautiful Alberta gardens. Project coordinators are looking for attractive perennial borders, annual beds, herb gardens, cottage gardens, alpine gardens and other unique gardens in the province. If you would like to participate or know of a note-worthy garden, please give the Garden a call (403)987-2064.

Jasper natural – history education

Anyone interested in natural history, alpine wildflowers and other outdoors mountain subjects, should check out the Jasper Institute of the Canadian Rockies. This year, a number of courses are being offered. Most courses are a weekend long. The Institute is operated by the Friends of Jasper National Park, a non-profit cooperative venture with Parks Canada. Proceeds go toward publishing, research, cultural preservation and educational activities in the park. On July 18 to 20, a course on alpine wildflowers is being offered. Botanists Elisabeth Beaubien and Lorna Allen take participants to the heathery alpine meadows above treeline to see moss campion, western spring beauty, yellow paintbrush and many other native plants. The course is challenging and physical fitness is a necessity. For prices and other weekend courses, contact the Institute at (403)852-4152.

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June 30, 1997

Tour the Parkland Conservation Farm

Discover things that you never knew about today's farming practices and the subtle beauty of the landscape of Alberta's aspen parkland region at the newly opened interpretive centre and trails at the Parkland Conservation Farm.

The Parkland Conservation Farm, located 19 kilometres west of Vegreville, 3 kilometres east of Mundare, on Highway 16, was set up in 1992 as part of the prairie wide Parkland Agricultural Research Initiative. The mission of the farm is to demonstrate ways of maintaining soil and water quality, develop ideas for improving sustainability of farm operations, learn from field scale research, share the landscape with wildlife and recognize how the whole environment plays a role in farming.

"Hundreds of farmers visit the farm every year to take in field days focusing on reduced tillage, machinery demos to livestock water quality and grazing systems," says Dean Kupchenko, manager of the Parkland Conservation Farm. "But, we knew this farm was a great place for non-farmers to come and visit, too. The rich diversity of wildlife on the farm makes this an excellent place to hike through. While here, visitors can learn about how food is produced today."

Two foot trails make it easy to explore the sights and sounds of the farm. Interpretive signs along the trails make for informative self-guided walks through fields and woodlands and alongside pastures, demonstration sites and research plots on the farm. Each trail is about two kilometres long and are linked together for those who want to hike the entire farm.

The interpretive centre has information displays about the farm's history, originally homesteaded by the Order of Basilian Fathers in 1903; research activities taking place on the farm; wildlife to watch for; conservation practices on the farm; and, grazing management systems.

The Honourable Ed Stelmach, Minister of Agriculture was on hand to open the interpretive centre and trail system.

Contact:	*Dean Kupchenko*	*Carol Bettac*
	(403) 632-2244	*(403) 427-3885*

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

International horticulture symposium

More than 400 scientists and growers from 38 countries attended a joint meeting of the International Society of Horticulture Science, the Hydroponic Society of America and the American Greenhouse Vegetable Growers Association, May 19 to 26, 1997 in Windsor, Ontario.

"The main subject of the symposium was the use of different growing media and hydroponics systems in commercial crop production," says Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza, greenhouse specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The highlight was the research being conducted in self sustaining life supporting systems utilizing plants."

A major focus addressed understanding plants not only as a food source, but also studying the other contributions plants make to the environment, including oxygen, carbon dioxide and other products. A study estimated that up to 2300 different types of microorganisms may be associated with root zones of hydroponically grown crops and good disease control can be obtained by manipulating the relative dominance of some of these microbes.

Dr. Mirza presented his research with medicinal plants grown in hydroponic systems. There was considerable interest in this area of plant production.

"Two computer programs may be of great interest to growers in Alberta," says Mirza. "ENERPASS is a computer program to predict temperatures and energy use in greenhouses. This program is being developed by the greenhouse and processing crops research station of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Harrow and Enermodal Engineering Ltd. It's currently being tested, to be released later this year."

Harrow greenhouse Crops Manager is another computer program that takes into consideration several management factors to make a crop related decision.

Contact: *Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza*
(403) 422-1789

Alberta's main squeeze – the processed forage industry

Alberta's agricultural industry is working hard to expand into growing global markets for processed goods. Hay producers, processors and marketers are successfully securing their place in the international feed market with processed forage products – tightly compressed timothy hay bales and alfalfa cubes or pellets.

"There are several different types of processed forage products that are used to feed dairy and beef cattle, horses, swine, poultry, sheep and goats," says Don Hansen, market economist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Using hydraulic presses, timothy hay is compacted into extremely dense bales measuring 14 X 18 X 18 inches and weighing 80 lbs. Alfalfa, on the other hand, can be processed in several ways."

Dehydrated alfalfa pellets, dehy pellets, are made from partly dried alfalfa cut in the late bud to early flowering stage. Harvesters deliver the chopped, green, wet material to a processing plant where it is dehydrated in natural gas dryers and mechanically compressed into small pellets.

"Artificially drying and rapid heating of alfalfa preserves nutrients," says Hansen. "The process makes dehy an excellent feed for cattle and other ruminants because it changes approximately 60 per cent of the protein into bypass form. Bypass protein is not readily broken down by microbes living in the rumen, a special part of a cow's stomach. Consequently, there is a higher level of protein absorption in the small intestine, which is important for rapidly growing ruminants and high producing dairy cattle."

Suncured alfalfa pellets, cubes and bales are made from naturally dried hay before being delivered to the processing plant for final drying and compressing. Alfalfa is finely chopped for the pellets, and coarsely shredded for the one to two inch cubes. Although suncured products contain less bypass protein than dehy, the cubes are an excellent source of long fibre forage for dairy cattle. Horses that are fed cubes as part of their diet grow more rapidly, and have longer and stronger bones than conventionally fed animals. Alfalfa pellets in poultry diets improve skin and egg pigmentation, and increase hatchability.

In addition to nutritional benefits, there are several other advantages to using processed forage. With their increased bulk density, both the densified hay and processed alfalfa products require less storage space, resulting in reduced transportation costs. The alfalfa cubes or pellets are easy to handle, and are appropriate for mechanized handling equipment. Livestock owners can also monitor food intake and regulate daily roughage easier than with unprocessed products. Industry standards ensure there is consistent nutrient quality and texture in alfalfa pellets and cubes. Furthermore, feed is not wasted, even when cubes or densified bales are placed on the ground. Processed forage is also beneficial for animals with respiratory problems because it has little dust, and it is not prone to mould or mildew because of low moisture content.

"Livestock owners around the world are using processed forage products," adds Hansen. "Principal markets are Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. About 90 per cent of Canadian processed alfalfa products are consumed by foreign markets. In 1995, approximately 63 per cent of the Canadian total, valued at over $80 million, was from Alberta."

Exports of densified timothy hay to Japan started in 1981 with a trial shipment of 17 metric tonnes. "Export shipments

Cont'd on page 3

increased to almost 100,000 MT in 1996 and we expect the total to double by the year 2000," says Isabel McPherson, executive director of the Canadian Hay Association. "That means processors are always looking for additional suppliers. Increased demand in foreign markets is a good sign that the processed forage industry will contribute to the well being of Alberta's economy."

Contact:	*Don Hansen* *(403) 422-2887*	*Isabel McPherson* *(403) 541-0911*

Irrigation Act review

Ed Stelmach, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, has appointed MLAs Glen Clegg (Chair), Ron Hierath and Ron Stevens to the Irrigation Act Review Committee to examine the province's Irrigation Act.

The Irrigation Act refers to the administration of the 13 irrigation districts in southern Alberta that govern more than one and a quarter million acres of irrigated land. When the Act was proclaimed in 1968, it superceded and incorporated several pieces of irrigation legislation dating back to 1915. The Act is enabling legislation that established rules and procedures for the orderly formation, operation and dissolution of the districts.

"The legislation is almost 30 years old," commented Stelmach. "A lot has changed in the irrigation community since 1968. The Act also needs to be reviewed by next year as part of the Government of Alberta's commitment to assess all legislation by 1998."

Albertans will have an opportunity to present their views about the legislation during the review process. Meetings will be held in Taber, Picture Butte and Brooks during the week of July 21 to 25, 1997. People may attend these meetings to share their views and/or make a presentation regarding the Irrigation Act. For those unable to attend the meetings, written submissions will also be accepted until the end of July.

"I'm especially looking forward to hearing the points of view of those who depend on the irrigation infrastructure for their livelihood," said Mr. Clegg. "The MLAs want to know the needs of the irrigation community, as well as those concerned about the operation of this Act but who are not directly involved in irrigation operations."

Local newspapers will publish meeting times and locations early July. For further information about appearing before or making written submissions to the committee, contact Len Fullen, Project Manager, Irrigation Act Review Committee, before July 15, 1997.

Contact:	*Glen Clegg, Chair* *(403) 427-1806* *Len Fullen* *(403) 422-2070*	*Ron Glen* *(403) 427-2137*

Irrigation Act background information

- The Irrigation Act is the legislation that governs the creation of irrigation districts in Alberta and outlines their powers and duties. The Act also establishes the Irrigation Council, the Irrigation Secretariat and the Irrigation Appeal Tribunal as administrative agencies to oversee the irrigation districts and handle appeals of irrigation district decisions. The existing Act is nearly 30 years old.
- There are 13 irrigation districts in Alberta that own and operate the irrigation infrastructure of canals, pipelines and off-stream storage reservoirs that deliver water to approximately 1.26 million acres of irrigated land (83 per cent of the irrigation in Alberta).
- This infrastructure provides water to 48 towns and villages, hundreds of county residences, farmsteads, industrial users and wetland projects. Most of the water-based recreation and much of the wetland habitat in southern Alberta is supported by the irrigation district infrastructure. This infrastructure is a significant feature of the southern Alberta economy, creating the opportunity for the diversification of the primary agriculture and value-added processing sectors in this semi-arid region of the province.
- Irrigation districts are local authorities with elected boards of directors, responsible for the financial and administrative affairs of their district and control the services provided to their water users.
- Review recommendations will be provided to government on changes that could be made to the existing legislative framework governing the irrigation districts to improve accountability and streamline administrative procedures. The goal is to ensure that the legislation enables the irrigation districts to perform their function in the most efficient and effective manner in serving the needs of their water users and the growing economy of southern Alberta.

Nutraceuticals and functional foods potential

A new class of food products is emerging in Canada. Nutraceuticals or functional foods are creating a lot of interest for food processors and agriculture producers. Calcium fortified water, bifidobacteria yogurt and bran cereal fortified with psyllium are a few examples of functional foods already found on market shelves.

"Processors face many uncertainties when it comes to the marketing of functional foods," says Kerry Engel, rural development specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "A separate regulatory framework for

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functional foods doesn't exist and there are currently no regulations regarding how to define functional foods and nutraceuticals."

Proposed definitions for these two categories are under review:

Functional food: is a food similar in appearance to conventional foods. They are consumed as part of a usual diet and have demonstrated physiological benefits and/or reduce the risk of chronic disease beyond basic nutrition functions.

Nutraceutical: is a product produced from food but sold in pills, powders, potions and other medicinal forms not generally associated with food and demonstrated to have a physiological benefit or provide protection against chronic disease.

"There are many trends that support the growth of this industry," says Engel. "The largest is the trend toward fortifying our food with disease preventing nutrients – a trend supported by increasing clinical evidence."

Other market opportunities driving the popularity of functional foods include: a greying/aging population, health care costs containment, consumer interest in nutrition, media, regulations, global markets, food technology advances and brand differentiation.

"Requirements for business success, keys to marketing, companies currently producing functional foods, the University of Alberta's development as a centre of excellence, and the boom of functional foods in Japan are issues related to the industry," adds Engel. "These issues and several others are covered in the latest issue of the *Northwest Processor*."

The Northwest Processor is a quarterly newsletter produced by rural development specialists at Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. Copies are available by contacting: Joyce Lencucha in Red Deer (403) 340-5358; Kerry Engel in Westlock (403) 349-4465; Karen Goad in Grande Prairie (403) 538-5629; Janice McGregor in Morinville (403) 939-4351; or Sharon Homeniuk in Stony Plain (403) 963-6101.

Contact: Kerry Engel
(403) 349-4465

A kick-start to agriculture value-added engineering

The Agricultural Value-added Engineering Centre (AVEC) was launched on June 2, 1997. AVEC is a development of the Engineering Services Branch of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, in its role of supporting the agri-food industry.

The goal of AVEC is to help meet the engineering-related needs of Alberta's growing agriculture value-added processing industry. Funding is provided by the Agriculture and Food Council (AFC) through the Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development Fund (CARDF), money provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

"CARD funding of $289,000 for 1997 gives a tremendous kick-start to the Centre," says John Chang, AVEC's manager at Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The funds will be used in three ways: to support a research centre, to set up an information resource centre and to fund projects. We will work closely with industry stakeholders, complementing existing resources and services."

The research centre will significantly enhance the research capability in the agriculture processing area. The information resource centre will meet a dire need of the industry for easy access to a wide range of information needed int the planning, development and operation of processing operations.

Over the next three years, funding from CARDF will provide a total of $350,000 for AVEC to financially support projects to help the industry's growth. Priority will be on projects designed to develop basic knowledge and skills for agri-food processing development, to target critical industry problems, and to foster adoption of new technologies.

Contact: John Chang
(403) 427-4170

Purple loosestrife – the beautiful killer

Purple loosestrife, a designated noxious weed, is an aggressive plant that invades wetlands, chokes out native vegetation and reduces food and shelter for wildlife.

Since 1990, when the first infestation of purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) was identified, hundreds of volunteers have joined Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development in the fight against this harmful, noxious weed.

"The prolific and aggressive nature of purple loosestrife make its presence a serious danger to wetlands in Alberta," says Shaffeek Ali, provincial weed specialist. "Loosestrife cannot be controlled with herbicides as there aren't any registered chemicals for aquatic areas. It can't be overstressed that once this weed has even the smallest foothold in a water body, it can spread at an alarming rate and completely choke out all other vegetation. When this happens, wildlife and fish leave the area and native plant life dies out."

When purple loosestrife infests an area, nothing else can inhabit that area. There are no Canadian birds, animals or fish that use purple loosestrife as food. In a wetland, wildlife eat around the weed, consuming the native plant population and leaving the purple loosestrife free to do what it does best, grow and spread.

This perennial weed produce seeds, some 2.5 million seeds per plant per year. The seeds are easily spread through

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streams, rivers and lakes. Being highly competitive, the loosestrife seeds germinate quickly once they touch ground.

"At one time ornamental Lythrum cultivars were thought to be sterile and were planted in gardens," adds Ali. "However, recent research have shown that the ornamental variety can cross pollinate and produce viable seed. Gardeners are encouraged to not grow the ornamental plant and remove it from their gardens."

Greenhouses and nurseries throughout Alberta have lent their assistance by voluntarily stopping the sale of Lythrum cultivars. A replacement program is in place in the province, and several nurseries are participating. Homeowners can dig up existing purple loosestrife plants, be sure to get the entire plant including root system, bag them carefully in plastic bags and bring them in to nurseries and receive a free perennial in exchange. Before you take your Lythrum in, please check with the nursery to confirm whether they are a participant.

"Purple loosestrife flowers from mid July through September which is the best time to look for this weed," says Ali. "Removing the plant before it produces viable seed is very important. It can be easily identified. The plant can grow from one to three metres tall and has long, spiked, bright pink/purple flowers. Five to six petals grow on each flower on the vertical spike. Leaves are tongue shaped with smooth edges and attached directly to a four-sided stem."

Colour brochures are available from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district offices and from Environmental Protection Fish & Wildlife offices throughout the province. For more information or to report a purple loosestrife infestation, contact your municipal weed inspector.

Contact: *Shaffeek Ali*
(403) 422-4909

Agri-News Briefs

Alternative crops tour – Brooks

The Crop Diversification Centre – South (CDC South) will be hosting an Alternative Crops tour on July 30, 1997. CDC South is located approximately five kilometres east of Brooks on Highway #1. The day begins at 9:30 a.m. and will finish up at 4:00 p.m. Producers will be able to discuss the production and potential of alternative crops with specialists in production, weed and disease control. Crops included in the tour are: pulse crops (peas, lentils, fababeans, lathyrus) and amaranth, sunflower, quinoa, buckwheat as well as others. The herb, spice, essential oil and medicinal crops will also be covered. There is a $10 charge for lunch. Pre-registration and pre-payment is a must, to allow for lunch preparations. For a registration form or for more information, contact Shelley Barkley (403) 362-1305 at CDC South.

Farmers' Markets – a growing concern

Farmers' Markets across the province are in full swing and full production. Fresh produce and the chance to support local farmers, bakers and craftspeople are only two of the many reasons for making a trip to your local Farmers' Market a frequent occurrance. Over the last few years, there has been a renewed interest in farmers' markets, and for good reasons. The markets provide additional income for local farmers, fresher produce, excellent quality, ethnic and specialty items, as well as a friendly, social atmosphere to shop in. People are eating 40 per cent more fresh products than in 1970, and that greater demand, is being answered by growers making almost double the horticultural production available to Albertans. At farmers' markets you'll find potatoes, mixed vegetables, raspberries, strawberries, saskatoons, eggs, specialty meats, fish and poultry. Value-added, finished and processed products such as cheeses, dairy, jams, jellies, honey, pickles, relish, herbs and baked goods can all be found at the local farmers' market along with handicrafts, woodwork, and clothing. Be sure to visit a farmers' market during Farmers' Market Week, July 20 - 26, 1997. This year's theme is ***A Fresh Taste from Alberta Farmers' Markets***. For more information, contact Judy Lavoie at (403) 672-3270.

Direct seeding into sod

The West Central Forage Association is hosting a Forages Without Tillage field day on Saturday, July 5. Tours and demos get underway at 10:00 a.m. and continue all day. The demo is located three miles north and one mile west of Wildwood. Barley was direct seeded in May into spring sprayed sod. A number of manufactures supplied direct seeding units for the plots. The drills will be back to seed again on July 5. There will be tours of the plots, presentations and demonstrations of the drills seeding into sod. The plots at Wildwood will be continued for several years to show seeding of annual crops into sod and seeding of forages into stubble, all with a single pass direct seeding system. The demo at Wildwood is co-sponsored by the Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative. For more information, contact Wilf Cody, manager of the West Central Forage Association at (403) 727-3673.

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AGRI-NEWS

July 7, 1997

CANADIANA

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Safety pays real dividends

Safety precautions when using farm machinery on Alberta highways pays off in many ways. Fewer personal injuries are benefit enough, reducing damage to machinery and decreasing loss of production time are just a couple of other tangible benefits that farmers and producers know make a difference to the 'bottom line'.

"All of the statistics are in for the 1995 farming year and the results are very encouraging," says Solomon Kyeremanteng, manager of the farm safety program with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The number of collisions involving farm equipment on highways is declining. The 1995 figures are the lowest reported in years, a very good sign."

The highest number of collisions involving farm equipment, 95, was reported in 1989 and in 1995, 65 farm equipment collisions were reported. As expected, between May and October, the months of increased farming activity, the largest number of incidents were reported, with September and October being the highest. Numbers of collisions involving vehicles pulling farm equipment has also declined over the past five years with a high of 79 in 1991 and a low of 54 in 1995.

"All of the promotional material and communication activities that have been done over the years are aimed at one thing - making safety precautions a standard code of practice in Alberta," says Kyeremanteng. "Statistics that indicate the safety precautions are being employed by Albertan farmers show that our safety programs are making a difference."

Rural roads and secondary highways were the scene of the majority of the collisions recorded in 1995. Of the 65 reported incidents, almost 89 per cent of these involved at least one other vehicle. In cases where the farm equipment was listed as causing the collision, the most frequently recorded causes were left turns across the path of other vehicles. The most commonly recorded action of other vehicles instigating collision were improper passing and following too closely.

"A few things to remember when operating farm machinery on rural roads are to ensure proper lighting, if traveling later in the day and evening," adds Kyeremanteng. "Functioning signal lights and visible hand signals should be used. So often, safety comes down to the little things, and its those little things that make all the difference in life. Always remember, *A Safe Farm is a Great Place to Grow*."

Full stats on farm machinery collisions, compiled by Alberta Transportation and Utilities, are available through the Farm Safety Program by calling (403) 427-4227.

Contact: Solomon Kyeremanteng
(403) 427-4227

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

Irrigation Act review – public meetings

Irrigation is vital to the economy and quality of life in southern Alberta. Most irrigated land is serviced by 13 Irrigation Districts in the area from Calgary to Cardston to Medicine Hat.

These districts operate under the authority of the Irrigation Act which spells out their powers and responsibilities. As part of the Alberta government's commitment to assess all legislation by 1998, a series of public meetings will be held to review the current 30-year-old Act.

The government is interested in hearing from organizations and individuals about matters pertaining to the Irrigation Act.

A review committee, chaired by Glen Clegg, MLA Dunvegan, with member MLAs Ron Hierath and Ron Stevens, will make recommendations to Ed Stelmach, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development on any changes needed to keep the Act current.

The public meetings will be held:

- Tuesday, July 22, 1:30 - 4:30 p.m., at the Heritage Inn in Taber
- Wednesday, July 23, 1:30 - 4:30 p.m., at the Picture Butte Community Centre
- Thursday, July 24, 1:30 - 4:30 p.m., at the Heritage Inn in Brooks

Information requests and written submissions should be forwarded to: Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Policy Secretariat, Attention: Len Fullen, Project Manager, #301, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6, or by calling (403) 422-2070.

Contact: *Len Fullen*
(403) 422-2070

Participation is the goal

The 3rd Annual Provincial 4-H Horse Classic promises to be a challenging experience for 4-H horse project members across Alberta. The exciting event, which promotes the sharing of horse knowledge will take place July 30 to August 1, 1997 at Olds College, Olds, Alberta.

"Participation, in all aspects of the program, is the goal," says Henry Wiegman, provincial 4-H agriculture specialist. "4-H members demonstrate equine knowledge and skills they have acquired throughout the 4-H club year and in turn learn from one another."

More than 155 outstanding 4-H members, representing 32 4-H clubs, will compete in the team horse bowl, demonstration, marketing and horse hippology contests. The top four senior 4-H members, based on individual contest points, will have the opportunity to go on to the National Western 4-H Horse Classic in Denver, Colorado in January, 1998.

"In addition to the contests, horse care clinics are offered daily for 4-H members and leaders," adds Wiegman.

The Horse Classic is sponsored by United Farmers of Alberta (UFA) and Lammle's Western Wear. Their generous support provides for prizes, judges and much more.

Contact: *Henry Wiegman*
(403) 422-4H4H

Farms on-line

Farm operations are getting larger, specialized and more complicated. Computer technology is increasingly becoming a valuable tool for making production decisions, conducting research and communicating.

"The 1996 Census reported that as of last year, 21.2 per cent of farms in Canada used a personal computer for farm management," says Gerard Vaillancourt, communications specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Alberta is above the national average with 22.9 per cent of farms using computers in their operations. B.C. was the only province ranking higher with 23.6 per cent."

As alternatives are found to solve the problems associated with long-distance charges for urban-based Internet providers, computer used in rural areas will likely expand to an even greater extent.

"Larger farm operators are the biggest users of computer based technology," says Vaillancourt. "Computers make it easier to manage the complex nature of larger farms."

The Census reports that poultry and egg farms were the highest users of computers. Canada-wide, 33.7 per cent of poultry farms, 33.5 per cent of hog farms and 27.5 per cent of dairy farms use computers as part of operation management. High gross farm receipts and having adopted high-tech equipment, computerized feeding and monitoring systems, in other aspects of their operations are two of the characteristics of poultry, hog and dairy operations that may explain this trend.

"Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development is recognized across Canada as one of the best agricultural sites on-line," adds Vaillancourt. "Our statistics show that more and more individuals are accessing the information and services provided on the site. The Internet is giving farmers access to current market information and through websites such as Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's ***Ropin' The Web*** they have a reference library available at their fingertips and in their own home."

Internet address for *Ropin' The Web* is:
http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca

Contact: *Gerard Vaillancourt*
(403) 422-6796

Keep an eye on pasture dugouts

Peak growing season is in full swing, not just on land but in the water. Aquatic plants are starting to grow vigorously.

"Most aquatic plants are harmless, but some species of blue-green algae are toxic," says Ken Williamson, agriculture engineering technologist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "It pays to keep an eye on stock watering dugouts."

The most common blue-green algae look like grass clippings in the water or make the water look green and soupy. If a large amount of algae blows to one edge of a water body and concentrates there, it can be especially dangerous. If algae toxins are present and an animal drinks the water, the animal can be dead in minutes.

"Combating concentrations of algae in stock watering sites can be done by fencing the water supply and pumping water to the cattle instead of letting the cattle drink directly from the dugout," says Williamson. "Pump intake in this type of system should be placed well away from the shore to avoid the higher concentrations of algae."

Other measures that can be taken include checking the water source before moving cattle on to an area. If some algae is present, treat the dugout with Bluestone (copper sulfate) to kill the algae. Caution should be used if a significant amount of toxic algae is present. Introducing Bluestone will release the toxin all at once causing a more toxic situation. If there is a lot of blue-green algae and bluestone is used, the water should not be used for at least two weeks after treatment.

Don't use more than¼ to ½ pound of bluestone per 100,000 gallons of water. Higher doses will kill beneficial zooplankton in the water. The zooplankton feed on some types of algae.

"As there is no economical way to test for algae toxins or toxic algae, it's best to treat any algae bloom as if it were toxic," says Williamson. "Not all small water plants are dangerous, however. Duck weed, frequently found in dugouts, is a small floating plant that consists of a small roundish leaf, about 1/8 inch in diameter with a white root hair hanging from the bottom and is often confused with algae. It is not toxic and will not be killed by bluestone. Duck weed can be beneficial in a dugout as blankets of the plant will shade the water column cutting off sunlight to algae."

If algae toxin is a concern, lime treatment can be used. The lime precipitates out the algae and doesn't appear to release toxins.

Factsheets on ***Dugout Maintenance*** (Agdex #FS716 (B34) and ***Hydrated Lime for Algae Control in Dugouts*** (Agdex #FS716 (B37) are available at local district offices or at the Publications Office, main floor, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. Additional information is also available on Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's website: **http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/water/index.html**

Contact *Ken Williamson*
(403) 340-5324

Cereal silage

Seeding to cereal silage is increasing in Alberta for several reasons. Weed control is just one of the advantages farmers appreciate. Many annual weeds can be eliminated by simply cutting the crop before weed seeds are mature.

"Cereal silage can be grown in a shorter season giving farmers the opportunity for late spring or early fall tillage," says Ron Hockridge, crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Peak workload times can be spread out as cereal silage can be seeded later and harvested earlier than grain crops for seed. Harvesting doesn't interfere with normal haying operations either."

Whether cereals or perennial forages, ensiling requires less curing in the field and produces a high quality forage product that fits many cattle feeding programs.

"There are challenges to cereal silage production as well as advantages," says Hockridge. "The cost of owning extra equipment and of separate storage structure can be a limiting factor. An alternative to these costs for the smaller operator could be the use of silage bags. While silage bags may be more expensive than a bunker silo in large operations, they can compare favorably for smaller operations."

Silage bags do an excellent job of preserving feed quality. Custom operators are available to take forage right from swathing through to bagging. Analysis should be done for individual operations to determine the best method for the farm.

"While most research on cereals is done for application to grain crops, most of the data can be transferred," adds Hockridge. "Seeding rates will usually be slightly higher for a crop planned for silage and fertilizer can be applied a little heavier. Variety selection is similar as a variety that yields well for grain will likely yield well for silage. Differences in straw to grain ratios among varieties moderate the comparisons somewhat."

Delays in seeding due to wet springs and showers may prompt many producers to look at cereal silage as an option to get some production from late fields. The availability of custom operators improves the feasibility of doing this in an emergency situation.

Contact: *Ron Hockridge*
(403) 361-1240

New fund to develop Alberta's beef cattle industry

Research and development in Alberta's beef industry is about to undergo a multi-million dollar improvement.

Canada and Alberta are contributing $8.2 million dollars each toward the establishment of the Canada-Alberta Beef Industry Development Fund (BIDF). The federal government's portion of the money comes from Alberta's share of the safety net companion agreement. Alberta's portion of the funding will be allocated from safety net budgets. The governments and industry have agreed these funds will be best spent on industry development.

The fund will be administered by the Alberta Cattle Commission, and will target production research opportunities important to Alberta's cow-calf and feedlot sectors. The fund can also be used for product research, biotechnology and development, value-added initiatives and market development and promotion of Alberta's beef industry.

The Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Lyle Vanclief, says the $16.4 million fund demonstrates Canada's long-term commitment to the development and enhancement of Canada's beef industry.

"Alberta is Canada's leader in beef cattle, and Alberta beef is renowned world-wide," said Vanclief. "This fund is part of our strategy to promote the long-term viability of agriculture for the benefit of producers and to ensure that we continue to be competitive in world markets."

Alberta's Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Ed Stelmach, says the BIDF will have significant benefits not only for Alberta, but for Canada as well. "This fund is another tool that will assist the Alberta agri-food industry achieve its market opportunity of $10 billion in primary agriculture and $20 billion in value-added processing by 2005."

A committee of beef cattle producers, a federal government representative and a provincial government representative will direct the BIDF.

The Chairman of the Alberta Cattle Commission, Larry Helland, welcomed the investment news. "Alberta cattle producers recognize the importance of our industry and the need to be competitive and self-reliant if we are to succeed in the global marketplace," he said. "This fund will contribute to that cause and help ensure the ongoing development of our industry."

Contact: Vern Greenshields
(613) 759-1020
Gary Sargent
(403) 275-4400
Ken Moholitny
(403) 427-3078

Fresh Vegetable Producers Board

The Agricultural Products Marketing Council appointed a trustee to conduct the operations of the Alberta Fresh Vegetable Producers (AFVP). This action followed the resignation of the seven-member board of directors of the Alberta Fresh Vegetable Producers.

The organization has had ongoing financial and operational difficulties for the past two years. A recently completed independent audit by Price Waterhouse, ordered by the Marketing Council, identified a number of areas of concern. Two particular issues were the significant drop in revenue from producers over the past two years as well as the possibility that approximately 55 per cent of service charges would be held back this year by dissatisfied producers.

Marketing Council will be removing the regulatory authority of the AFVP in the very near future. This move means that no regulations will be enforced on the fresh vegetable industry during the 1997 crop year. Later this year, producers will be consulted on the future of the organization, including a possible plebiscite.

The Alberta Fresh Vegetable Producers organization (formerly Fresh Vegetable Producers Marketing Board) was established under the Marketing of Agricultural Products Act in 1974. The AFVP has the authority to collect a service charge from producers to be used for research, promotion and market development for the fresh vegetable industry in Alberta.

Contact: Brian Rhiness
(403) 427-2164

Agri-News Briefs

Farm management congress

The 11th International Farm Management Congress is scheduled for July 14 to 19, 1997 at the University of Calgary. The theme of this year's Congress is *Managing into the 21st Century*. A well-rounded and highly respected list of speakers have contributed papers and will conduct plenary sessions. A record number of tours focusing on Canada's innovative agricultural production, agri-business and value-added industries are planned. A Congress Website, including all information on registration, abstracts of plenary sessions and contributed papers, details on tours and field trips, speaker information and updates on Congress activities can be viewed at: http://www.re.ualberta.ca/ifma.htm. For further information, contact Margaret Anne Stroh (403) 220-6229, Calgary; fax (403) 284-4184; e-mail mastroh@acs.ucalgary.ca

Canadian Highland Cattle Society meeting

In August the Canadian Highland Cattle Society (CHCS) holds its annual general meeting at Nakoda Lodge, Seebee, Alberta, beginning on Friday, August 1 with a registration reception. In conjunction with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AFRD), the Alberta Highland Cattle Association is hosting a seminar on Saturday, August 2. Topics include: choosing heifers for the beef herd, nutrition, record keeping, marketing in the U.S., niche marketing, and branded products. A Highland buffet dinner is planned for Saturday night. The annual general meeting will get underway at 10:00 a.m., Sunday, August 3. The event wraps up with demonstrations and a BBQ in Red Deer on Monday, August 4. To attend contact Lesley Jackson (403) 985-3863, Calmar, or e-mail vjackson@compusmart.ab.ca

Country Market Festivals

Three market festivals are scheduled for Leduc this summer. The Strawberry Festival -July 19; Leduc #1 - 50th Anniversary Homecoming Festival - August 2; and, the Family Festival – August 16. Fresh produce vendors, both private and commercial, are welcome to participate as well as crafters, artisans and people selling various home-made food items. The only stipulation to vendors is that they must 'make it', 'bake it' or 'grow it' themselves. Vendors should contact Linda Mix, country market coordinator, (403) 980-7178, Leduc, to book booth space. A variety of activities happen at the country markets including: entertainment, demonstrations, children's activities along with the variety of produce and products at vendor booths. For more information, contact Linda Mix

REDA Cooperative Youth Program

Each summer Rural Education and Development Association (REDA) coordinate youth programs in Alberta at the Goldeye Centre. There is still room left in the program for Albertans between the ages of 13 and 19. The program offers young people a chance to experience fun learning. The week long sessions expand knowledge and skills in the areas of leadership, communications, problem solving, community building, making presentations, cooperation and co-operatives. A combination of sessions, exercises, games and activities provide the learning platform. Canoeing, swimming, baseball, volleyball, mini olympics, improv/skit night and a masquerade ball are among the recreational and social activities taking place. The camps are one-week long and the dates are: Teen Program (ages 13 or 14 who have not previously attended) Teen A - July 16 to 22; Teen B - July 22 to 28; Teen C - July 28 to August 3; Youth Program (ages 15 to 17 who have not previously attended) Youth A - July 4 to 10; Youth B - July 10 to 16. Fee for participation is $340, includes GST. Youths should approach their local Co-operatives and Credit Unions for sponsorship. Brochures are available from Co-operatives and Credit Unions, or for more information, contact Diana Petrovic, manager of youth development, REDA (403) 451-5959.

Pulse tour

The Alberta Pulse Growers Commission Zone 5 is sponsoring a tour on Friday, July 18, 1997. The day begins with a pancake breakfast at 7:30 a.m. with the tour starting at 9:00 and finishing at 1:15 p.m., lunch to follow. Busses leave from D&R Catering, just west of AWP elevator, in Vegreville. Tour highlights include: field pea herbicide demonstrations, field pea variety and standability trials, dry bean trials, nitrogen release following field peas research, ascochyta/micosphaerella control research, and special crop trials. To register, phone Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district offices at Lamont (403) 895-2219, Vermilion (403) 853-8101 or St. Paul (403) 645-6301.

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AGRI-NEWS

July 14, 1997

Herbicide resistance

Seeding is over and it's time to think about spraying crops. Deciding which herbicide to use can be difficult.

"Choosing a herbicide correctly takes several variables into consideration," says Agnes Whiting, crop specialist – cereals/oilseeds with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The decision is firstly based on the ability of a herbicide to control the target weed and if a similar acting herbicide was used in a field the previous year. Herbicide resistant weeds are a growing problem and rotating the herbicide group used the same way crops are grown in rotation is the best defense against this problem."

Herbicides are divided into 15 different groups based on their chemistry and how they control weeds. The following listed groups include:

- Group 1 – Select, Horizon, Assure, Poast, Achieve
- Group 2 – Muster Pursuit, Ally, Champion Plus
- Group 3 – Edge, Fortress, Rival, Treflan
- Group 4 – 2-4,D, Attain, Curtail M, Banvel
- Group 5 – Atrazine, Crossfire, Sencor
- Group 6 – Achieve Extra, Laser, Unity
- Group 7 – Karmex, Afolan, Stampede EDF
- Group 8 – Avenge 200-C, Avadex BW, Fortress
- Group 9 – Laredo, Roundup, Rustler
- Group 10 – Liberty
- Group 11 – Amitrol-T
- Group 15 – Dual, Primextra Light, Kerb 50W
- Group 22 – Reglone, Gramoxone
- Group 25 – Mataven L
- Group 26 – TCA

"Herbicide resistance develops when herbicides from a group are repeatedly used in the same field," says Whiting. "The weeds are under 'selection pressure'. This selection pressure removes the weeds from the field that are susceptible to the herbicide leaving the weeds that are resistant to multiply and become the dominant population. Selection pressure can create a resistant population in as little as four years."

Herbicide rotation may mean using a product not as effective in controlling the weed, or more expensive. However, this is far better and cheaper than having a herbicide resistant weed population that can't be controlled.

"There are also reports of weeds being resistant to several groups of herbicides," adds Whiting. "Identifying resistance can be difficult. "Poor weed control caused by mechanical or environmental factors must be ruled out first."

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

If resistance remains a possibility, check for the following:

- are other weeds listed on the product label being controlled;
- is the herbicide failure very patchy over the field;
- was there a failure of the same herbicide or herbicide group last year;
- do the weeds show herbicide injury symptoms but are still growing; and,
- does the field history show the repeated use of the same herbicide or herbicide group?

"Minimizing the development of herbicide resistant weeds involves keeping accurate field records, using herbicides only when needed, planning an integrated weed control strategy and tank mixing to control weeds with different types of chemical action," says Whiting.

If there is a possibility of herbicide resistance showing up in a field, contact the local Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development office and ask to speak to a crop specialist.

Contact: Agnes Whiting
(403)753-6871

Farmers' Markets – got it goin' on

July 20 to 26, 1997 is Farmers' Market week in Alberta. Add that to all the other fresh, exciting reasons for visiting farmers' markets and make this special week a family outing event at the farmers' market in your area.

"Member farmers' markets throughout the province are adding a little dash and panache to the markets during Farmers' Market week," says Judy Lavoie, chair of the Alberta Farmers' Market Association (AFMA). "In keeping with the theme, ***A Fresh Taste from Alberta Farmers' Markets***, some special events are planned. Everything from free coffee, door prizes, draws, quilt shows, and pea shelling competitions to Christmas in July and pancake breakfasts can be experienced at local markets."

Alberta farmers' markets have increased their popularity considerably over the past few years. They offer an impressive variety of products and produce all set in a social community atmosphere. In a recent survey, Albertans named quality of products, freshness, local farmer support, social atmosphere and community support along with the variety of specialty, ethnic and organic products available as the main reasons they shop their farmers' market.

"The AFMA is very proud of Alberta's Farmers' Market vendors," says Lavoie. "This special week is timed when the variety of fresh produce is at its peak. We hope Albertans will take the opportunity and visit the farmers' market in their area and help celebrate the variety and diversity of local Alberta producers and processors."

A full listing of Alberta Farmers' Markets (and their times of operation) is available from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development Crop Diversification Centre – South (403)362-1300, Brooks and CDC – North (403)422-1789, Edmonton.

Contact: Judy Lavoie (403)672-3270
Simone Demers-Collins (403)422-1789

Royal Bank Interprovincial Exchange – 4-H

On July 3, 1997, five out-of-province delegates arrived in Alberta to participate in the Royal Bank Interprovincial Exchange sponsored by the Royal Bank of Canada. The five delegates were Tonya King of Kitimat, British Columbia; Laurie Hannis of Paradise Hill, Saskatchewan; Angela Joy Terry of Turro, Nova Scotia; Anne Alyward of Kings Cove, Newfoundland; and Isabelle Guay of Coaticook, Quebec.

"The five 4-Hers flew into Calgary on July 3rd and attended a "Welcoming Breakfast" on July 4, where they participated in a "White Hat Presentation" by the Royal Bank of Canada," says Marguerite Stark, provincial 4-H programs specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The delegates then met their first Alberta host family, whom they stayed with until July 10. They then traveled to the home of their second host family where they remained until their send-off on July 16."

All of the hosts are 4-H families and were enthusiastic about welcoming fellow Canadians into their homes and providing them with the opportunity to experience the culture and lifestyle of another Canadian province. Tonya King (Kitimat, British Columbia) stayed with the Guitton family of Claresholm and then visited the Wohland family of Thorhild. The Franz family of Didsbury hosted Laurie Hannis (Paradise Hill, Saskatchewan) for the first week before she travelled to the home of the Flitton family in Carstairs. The Belair family of Fort Saskatchewan enjoyed having Angela Joy Terry (Turro, Nova Scotia) stay with them until she was hosted by the Sakariassen family from Carstairs. Anne Alyward (Kings Cove, Newfoundland) visited the Dykstra family of Ponoka and the Armitage family of Red Deer. Isabelle Guay (Coaticook, Quebec) stayed at the home of the Turre family from Halkirk and then traveled to St. Paul to stay with the Chamberland family.

Having two host families gave the delegates a wonderful opportunity to see various parts of our beautiful province, experience diverse Alberta lifestyles, and meet more fellow 4-H members. The delegates leave Alberta on July 16 to travel home.

Contact: Marguerite Stark at (403) 948-8510

International 4-H conference

Imagine having the opportunity to participate in an International 4-H Conference! This dream is a reality for four Alberta 4-H delegates and two chaperones. On July 5, 1997 Tawnya Copland of Tees, Lacey Moses of Vermilion, Ryan Ronald of Ponoka, Darren Stoneman of Rumsey, and Stacy Murray of Fairview (chaperone) departed to Bozeman, Montana to participate in the annual Montana 4-H Congress The group visited different historical and agricultural points of interest as they travel through southern Alberta and northern Montana to Bozeman. Through sponsorship, Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development has made this opportunity possible.

"Once at the congress, they participated in educational and social programs and various clinics," says Marguerite Stark, provincial 4-H programs specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "They observed various 4-H project competitions and were the first Alberta 4-Hers to participate in an International Livestock Judging Competition."

After the congress the group toured a few sites on their way north and returned to their Alberta homes on July 12.

"The four delegate participants were chosen at the 1997 Provincial 4-H Selections Program based on 4-H and community involvement, as well as interpersonal skills," adds Stark.

4-H and its sponsors provide many exciting educational opportunities and the Montana Congress was definitely a highlight in these 4-Hers endeavors.

Contact: Marguerite Stark at (403) 948-8510

Delegates and Chaperones:

Stacy Murray	*(403)835-2241*
Tawnya Copland	*(403) 788-2426*
Lacey Moses	*(403) 853-4484*
Ryan Ronald	*(403) 784-3621*
Darren Stoneman	*(403) 368-2125*

U of A to be functional foods centre of excellence

The emerging field of functional foods and nutraceuticals requires new technology in food processing. The University of Alberta, in conjunction with industry partners, is leading the way.

"The U of A and partners are setting up a Centre of Excellence and research network to stimulate the development of market-oriented value-added foods," says Janice McGregor, rural development specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "With approximately $100.00 available in seed funding, they will develop a business plan, meet with industry players to establish a focus for the centre and identify research opportunities."

The new University/Industry Research Network in Functional Foods and Nutraceuticals is targeting a budget of $26 million over its first four years. Funding sources include: industry federal and provincial governments, universities and other institutions. The aim of the network is to target the development of products in tune with market place needs and provide the scientific documentation necessary to support specific health claims

"Nutraceuticals are only one facet in the whole area of agri-food/fibre research," says Dr. John Kennelly, professor, faculty of Agricultural Food and Nutritional Science, U of A. "With special expertise in meats and plant research, the faculty will contribute a solid scientific base in development of value-added products and components. Although many of the products developed will be for export markets, standardized efficacy of product quality and control will make it easier to justify health claims for consideration in the domestic market"

"A working group, established by Health Canada, is looking at ways to make food-specific health claims for these wellness products," adds McGregor. "With an aging population and an increasing interest in eating foods for specific health benefits, the Centre of Excellence is well positioned to be the link between industry and research in the growing area of functional foods."

Processors interested in exploring research opportunities or new product development may contact Kennelly at the U of A (403)492-2133.

Contact: Janice McGregor
(403)939-4351

A call for research proposals

The new Alberta Beef Industry Development Fund (ABIDF) is administered by the Alberta Cattle Commission and will primarily target production research opportunities important to Alberta's cow-calf and feedlot sectors. The Fund will be jointly supported by the federal government and the Alberta Government. Alberta's portion of the funding will be allocated from safety net budgets.

A committee of beef cattle producers as well as a representative from both the federal and provincial governments will direct ABIDF. The committee has established vision for the fund. **ABIDF Vision**: To make Alberta "the most competitive, profitable, sustainable and market-driven, high-quality beef producer".

The Alberta Agricultural Research Institute (AARI) has been asked by the committee to manage the ABIDF Research Program

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"The purpose of the program is to financially support projects that contribute to the achievement of the Fund's research priorities and vision for Alberta's beef industry," says Yilma Teklemariam, research manager of AARI, with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "On behalf of the ABIDF Committee, AARI invites all interested parties to submit pre-proposals for beef production research funding. **The due date for submission of pre-proposals for this round of reviews is July 28, 1997**. In addition to the original, applicants must submit 11 copies, which are required for distribution to committee members."

The research priorities of the ABIDF are to:

- Improve regional beef production efficiencies through targeting characteristics inherent to Alberta's climate and feedstuffs.
- Enhance the sustainability of beef production in Alberta through better management of water quality, cattle manure, odor, land use, animal health, nutrient cycling and food safety.
- Increase the intellectual resources available to Alberta beef producers at educational institutions and/or research centres.

There will be another call for proposals this year, which will be announced at a later date. A copy of the information package about the pre-proposals can be obtained from:

Alberta Agricultural Research Institute
#202, 7000 - 113 Street
Edmonton AB T6H 5T6

Phone: (403) 427-1956 **Fax:** (403) 427-3252

Contact: Dr. Yilma Teklemariam
(403) 422-6519

Agri-News Briefs

4-H – Operation Enterprise

On July 7, 1997, two Alberta 4-H delegates had a very exciting start to their summer vacation. They travelled to Lloydminster Saskatchewan where they took part in the American-based program "Operation Enterprise." Located at the Lloydminster campus of Lakeland College, Operation Enterprise is an extensive business management seminar designed to help delegates become stronger managers and leaders, make career decisions, and set personal goals. Darren King of Vermilion and Rachel Gray of Big Stone were the two Alberta 4-H delegates who attended the seminar. Darren was sponsored by Nelson Lumber Foundation and Rachel was sponsored by AEC Pipelines. These two delegates were chosen at the 1977 Provincial 4-H Selections Program based on 4-H and community involvement, as well as interpersonal and leadership skills. After ten days of small group discussions, workshops, and one-to-one discussions with top executives from the business world, Darren and Rachel returned home on July 16, 1997. For more information, contact Marguerite Stark (403) 948-8510. Delegates: Darren King (403) 853-2226, Vermilion; Rachel Gray (403) 566-3789, Big Stone.

4-H leadership seminar

Three Alberta 4-H delegates joined representatives from a number of youth organizations at a two-part leadership seminar which began on July 1, 1997. Marie Boles of Three Hills, Joanne Huston of Sibbald, and Melissa Kachan of Vermilion earned this honor by attending the 1997 Provincial 4-H Selections Program. Trip awards are based on 4-H and community involvement, as well as interpersonal and leadership skills. Alberta Recreation and Parks hosted the Youth Leadership Seminar, which was held at the Blue Lake Adventure Lodge in Hinton. Part one ran July 1-6, 1997 and part two runs October 9-12, 1997. The seminar's aim is to improve participants' group planning, communication, and personal skills in order to enhance their leadership skills. Delegates participated in initiative tasks, presentations, and a wide variety of recreational activities including rock climbing, orienteering, navigating, canoeing, and kayaking. For more information, contact Marguerite Stark (403) 948-8510. Delegates: Marie Boles (403)443-7461, Three Hills; Joanne Huston (403)676-2267, Sibbald; Melissa Kachan (403) 853-4836, Vermilion.

Royal Bank Interprovincial Exchange – 4-H

From July 2-16, 1997, five Alberta 4-H delegates participated in the Royal Bank 4-H Interprovincial Exchange, sponsored by Royal Bank of Canada. This exchange gives young adults from across Canada the opportunity to travel and experience the lifestyle of another Canadian province. The five delegates who represented Alberta on this exchange were chosen at the 1997 Provincial 4-H Selections Program based on 4-H and community involvement, as well as interpersonal skills. The award recipients were Jennifer DeVries of Vermilion who visited British Columbia; Rod Phillips of Okotoks who visited Saskatchewan; Joyce Noga of Medicine Hat who visited Quebec; Tim Wray of Irricana who visited Nova Scotia; and Lisa Mandrusiak of Two Hills who visited Newfoundland. Before leaving on their exchange these 4-Hers met in Calgary for a send-off banquet sponsored by the Royal Bank of Canada. Delegates then flew to their host province where they joined other out-of-province 4-H delegates and attended a welcoming reception. The 4-Hers stayed with two host families for the remainder of their trip, giving them a chance to experience the various lifestyles, traditions, and cultures of that province. Alberta delegates return home July 16. For further information, contact Marguerite Stark (403)948-8510. Delegates: Jennifer DeVries (403)853-2733, Vermilion, Rod Phillips (403)933-2977, Okotoks, Joyce Noga (403)527-3271, Medicine Hat, Tim Wray (403)935-4660, Irricana, and Lisa Mandrusiak (403)657-2170, Two Hills.

Safety thoughts for the day

Starting each day with a good breakfast is good, starting each day with a safety thought is even better. That's why Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's farm safety program, in cooperation with CFCW radio are featuring a new safety thought for the day each and every weekday from July 1 to December 31. The daily thoughts will be positive, thought provoking, persuasive and will promote farm safety. The thoughts will relate to all areas of rural/farm life – machinery operation, livestock handling, chemical use, protective clothing and general health and wellness. Safety is positively a part of operating a farm. Remember – ***A Safe Farm is a Great Place To Grow!*** For further information, contact Solomon Kyeremanteng, manager farm safety program with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, (403)427-4227.

Echinacea workshop

Two Echinacea production workshops held on June 25 and 26 accommodated attendance of over 90 people from across Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and B.C. These workshops were so oversubscribed that a third workshop is scheduled for Wednesday August 13 from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. at the Brooks Campus of the Medicine Hat College. The college is located close to the TransCanada Highway. Subjects of discussion include: germination of Echinacea, early seedling diseases, greenhouse and field production. "The Echinacea plant is of medicinal importance and a viable production base can be established in Alberta," says Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza, greenhouse crops specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AFRD). The workshop is sponsored by the Alberta Greenhouse Growers Association and Canadian Herb Society, Alberta Group. For more information, contact Mirza at (403)422-1789, Edmonton, Jim Calpas (403)362-1312, Brooks, or Dr. R. J. Howard (403)362-1328

Tractor Trouble

Farm safety is an important issue. The Farm Safety Program, headed by Solomon Kyeremanteng, has for years partnered with producer boards, equipment companies, organizations and associations to promote farm safety. The most recent project, in cooperation with the Alberta Womens' Institute (AWI), was launched at the annual meeting marking the 100th anniversary of the AWI. The book, ***Tractor Trouble***, is the first in a series of farm safety books written for children by author David Poulson. The membership will be distributing copies to Alberta libraries to help promote the book. With farm machinery dealership support, the book will be available at dealerships throughout the province. All proceeds go toward funding the next books in the safety series dealing with chemicals, animals, water, electricity and fire. For further information, contact Kyeremanteng at (403)427-4227 or Janet Halberg of AWI at (403)488-5282

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AGRI-NEWS

July 21, 1997

CANADIANA
AUG 10 1997

New crops for Alberta

The special crops program at Crop Diversification Centre – North (CDC-North) is holding its annual field day on August 7, 1997. CDC-North is one of the test sites where imported plant species from across Canada and around the world are grown to evaluate their plant performance under Alberta's environmental conditions. This is an opportunity to see how new crops are developing and performing in the province.

"The focus this year is on a wide range of crops suitable for either small or large-scale production in Alberta," says Dr. Stan Blade, plant breeder/agronomist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "A significant amount of work is being done on pulse crops such as field peas, fababeans, lentils and dry beans. New lines are being developed for the province and basic research conducted to improve yield and other important growth characteristics."

Other alternate crops such as borage, sunwheat, quinoa and canaryseed, including the new hairless variety, are growing at the Centre. Spice crops such as caraway, coriander and dill will be in flower.

"A growing demand for herbs and medicinal plants may have a great deal of potential for Alberta.," says Blade. "The CDC-North demonstration garden features a wide range of species including ginseng, echinacea, feverfew and a host of others. Albertans wanting to know how culinary herbs such as French tarragon, anise, cumin and others grow under Alberta conditions will be able to see these plants in test plots. Aromatics such as peppermint and spearmint are also on display."

To attend the field day, please register by phone, (403)422-1789. Pre-registration is required so that transportation arrangements for the tour can be made.

Contact: Stan Blade
(403)422-1789

Ancient grains and medicinal herbs

Increasing demand for medicinal herbs and shifting consumer tastes have caused an increase in the total acreage devoted to growing specialty crops in Canada. This trend resulted in a special section on culinary and medicinal herbs, and ancient grains in the '96 Census report.

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Some of the interesting Canadian statistics include:

- 450 farms reported growing 5,814 acres of ginseng, mostly in Ontario and B.C.
- in 1996, over one million kilograms of ginseng roots were exported, mostly to Hong Kong
- 9,300 acres of coriander, virtually all grown in Saskatchewan
- both leaves and seeds of coriander are used in cooking
- about 480 Canadian farms grew 1,046 acres of garlic, a significant expansion from the 156 acres in 1991 (previous Census)
- 2,038 acres of spelt, an ancient grain that is a staple in Ethiopia, were grown

"The Census statistics are showing what we've been saying for some time – there is growing interest and market value in alternative crops. The key is growing the crop that has market potential and suits the soil and climate conditions in the province," says Dr. Stan Blade, plant breeder/agronomist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The work being done at the Crop Diversification Centres – North and South, in Edmonton and Brooks, is designed to help Alberta growers identify crops that will grow well here. Many 'new' crops show promise for Alberta farmers and growers who want to devote some space to new, diverse, alternative crops for specialty markets."

Contact: Stan Blade
(403)422-1789

Deadline for FIDP paperwork eased

Farmers now have until this fall to supply supporting information for any claims under the Farm Income Disaster Program (FIDP).

Ed Stelmach, Alberta's Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, says the change recognizes that it's been a tough farming year in some parts of the province.

Alberta farmers applying to make a claim must still submit the completed first page of the FIDP application form by July 31, 1997. However, they now have until September 30, 1997, to provide the rest of the supporting information to the Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC).

"It's been a late season in some areas, and it's been unusually wet in others, putting farmers well behind in their field operations," said Mr. Stelmach. "As a result, many farmers, and their accountants, have been telling us they need more time to prepare their application forms."

Farmers applying this year should fill out the basic information on the first page, such as name and land location. Their $50 application fee must also accompany their application. If farmers choose not to send in the rest of their information before September 30, their cheque will not be cashed.

FIDP is a voluntary program that works in conjunction with crop insurance to protect farmers against severe and uncontrollable reductions in income. Farmers can apply if their margin (the difference between agriculture income and eligible expenses) drops more than 30 per cent in any one year compared with their previous three year average.

FIDP is funded by the Alberta government and administered by AFSC. The program meets the provisions for farm income stabilization under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). This is an important feature as it means Alberta is less likely to face challenges from its international trading partners.

The FIDP was first introduced for the 1995 tax year. In 1996 the program helped 4,943 applicants and paid out $63.3 million to Alberta farmers.

Farmers who need more information on the FIDP can call 1-800-851-5070.

Contact:	*Elaine Williams Allin*	*Dave Schurman*
	(403) 427-2137	*(403) 782-8330*

An agriculture extravaganza

Twenty-five fortunate senior 4-H members will increase their awareness of the diversity of agriculture in northern Alberta and the Northwest Territories through participating in the 4-H Alberta/Northwest Territories Agriculture Development Tour held July 12-30, 1997.

The 4-H Alberta/Northwest Territories Agriculture Development Tour departs from Edmonton and extends to Yellowknife, which is the most northerly destination. Camping en route, the members purchase Alberta products wherever possible, visit agricultural processing and production facilities, and identify Alberta products that are available in the Northwest Territories. "This tour allows members to gain an appreciation of different cultures and lifestyles that exist in our province and neighbouring territory," says Janet Kerr, regional 4-H specialist from Stettler who is chaperoning the tour. "The tour is a real eye-opener for the members. They become aware of the diversity and scope of agriculture in the Peace country. They also visit other food processing industries like the Fresh Water Fish Plant in Hay River, NWT" adds Kerr.

Award recipients were chosen at the 1997 4-H Provincial Selections Program, held at Olds College in May. Trip awards are based on community and 4-H involvement as well as interpersonal skills. The award recipients include Becky Trabysh, Hairy Hill; Heidi Bilben, Balzac; Miranda Milligan, Red Deer; Luke Schoening, Pincher Creek; Melinda Beier, Altario; Wendy Schneider, Daysland; Kelly Butler, New Norway;

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Jody Murphy, Altario; Jamie Urch, Drumheller; Julaine Newton, Del Bonita; Colleen Sackett, Crossfield; Paddy Carlson, Cardston; Andrew Little, Fairview; Kelly Walton, Hanna; Beverly Guitton, Claresholm; Jessica Belair, Fort Saskatchewan; Lamie Lynn Geekie, Crossfield; Victor Quast, Westerose; Blaine Stone, Westerose; Ken Miller, Balzac; Candice Massie, Bassano; Daniel Gray, Big Stone; Craig Clark, St. Albert; Craig Vossler, Irvine; and Sheila Taylor, Didsbury. Clinton Ziegler of Vegreville will also accompany the tour as leader chaperone.

Alberta Treasury Branches and the 4-H Programs Trust show their continued support and commitment to the 4-H Program and its youth through sponsoring this enjoyable educational experience.

Contact: Janet Kerr
(403)742-7547

April showers, May flowers, June more showers

The overall provincial average rainfall was 26 per cent above normal and the provincial average temperature was very near normal for June in Alberta. However, rainfall amounts varied widely, from 27.2 mm at Drumheller, 47 per cent of normal, to 178.2 at Cold Lake, 263 per cent of normal.

"Ample rainfall in most of Alberta and near average temperatures and heat units provided very good growing conditions for most crops," says Peter Dzikowski, agri-weather resource specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Satellite imagery confirms that crop and pasture conditions throughout Alberta are much better than normal. The frequent and abundant rain has also provided suitable conditions for crop diseases to develop."

"The northwest and northeast agricultural regions reported rainfall about 50 per cent above normal," says Dzikowski. "Northwest region reported the greatest rainfall at 137.9 mm. The southern region reported the least with 67.8 mm, very close to the 67.2 mm normal."

Temperatures in southern Alberta were 0.4° C cooler than normal, which means that there was about one day less heat (growing degree-days) for crop development than in a normal June. The northeastern region reported the warmest temperatures, 0.4° C above normal, which means there was almost two extra days heat for crop development. The remaining regions reported slightly above normal temperatures, which amounts to about one day ahead for June.

The results are based on data from 43 Alberta locations reporting to Environment Canada.

Contact: Peter Dzikowski
(403)427-3594

Hamburger disease

We aren't immune to hamburger disease at any time, but with barbeque season in full swing it's even more important to take care when handling and cooking meat.

"Hamburger disease, the nickname for *haemorrhagic colitis*, is often linked with undercooked ground beef," says Linda St Onge, food scientist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Hamburger isn't the only culprit, however. All undercooked beef, pork and poultry, as well as unpasteurized milk can be growing medium for *E.coli* bacteria."

There are a few basic food-handling precautions when cooking meat that will prevent illness:

- cook ground beef and chicken thoroughly so there is no pink in the centre and juices are clear. Internal temperature of larger cuts of meat can be checked with a meat thermometer
- don't let raw or cooked meat sit at room temperature. Serve cooked meats immediately or keep hot and cook prepared hamburger patties or other meats immediately or refrigerate
- refrigerate or freeze meats as soon as possible after buying
- thaw frozen meats in the refrigerator or in a microwave and not at room temperature
- wash your hands thoroughly before and after handling food and raw meats
- wash all utensils, cutting boards and counters with hot soapy water to prevent bacteria in raw meats from contaminating other foods
- wash all utensils or plates that have been in contact with raw meats before using again
- avoid unpasteurized milk

"On the very positive side, Alberta Health reports that incidents of hamburger disease are down this year," says St. Onge. "The disease is a gastrointestinal illness caused by *E.coli* bacteria. The bacteria produces a poison, or toxin, that damages the intestinal lining and results in *haemorrhagic colitis*. Symptoms include: severe stomach cramps, bloody diarrhea, dehydration and a mild fever, two to eight days after eating contaminated food."

Recommendations from Alberta Health on treating hamburger disease are very explicit:

- see your doctor if you experience bloody diarrhea
- do not take medication to stop the diarrhea, unless prescribed by your doctor
- drink lots of clear fluids
- in most cases, antibiotics are not useful

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"Most people recover from the disease within two weeks," adds St. Onge. "In a very small number of cases, the *E.coli* toxin results in a serious, sometimes fatal complication called Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS). This kidney failure can result in the need for dialysis and, eventually, kidney transplant. It is especially dangerous to young children, the chronically ill and the elderly."

Contact: Linda St. Onge
(403)986-4793

Feed Pea markets

It's time to start planning the marketing of seeded pea crops. The options open to producers are for human or livestock consumption in domestic or export markets.

"The human consumption market may look like the highest price, but when you consider dockage, cracks and freight charges, the best place to sell peas may be to the local feed market," says Neil Miller, crop specialist - pulse and special crops, with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Three quarters of Alberta's pea production goes for livestock feed. When selling into the export market, contact the various export buyers and take the best price. Selling into the domestic market may take a little more work, but it can pay big dividends."

The biggest domestic market is for hog feeding. Feeding trials by the Alberta Pulse Growers Commission and others have shown that peas can successfully replace soymeal in swine rations. More and more hog producers and feed mills are now looking at using peas. Feeders are looking for peas that are high nutritional value and are clean or free of dockage.

"Producers looking at the domestic feed market have to produce a quality product and analyse for actual nutrient content," says Miller. "Producers must also let potential buyers know what they have for sale. This is most successfully done by taking samples and analysis information to feeders and feed mills. Being a little aggressive as a seller can pay dividends."

Contact: Neil Miller
(403)782-3301

Safe farm fuel storage and handling

Summer is a good time to look at fuel storage tanks and handling practices on the farm.

"Environmental legislation makes the legal implications of pollution due to fuel leaks or spillage severe," says John Chang, energy engineer with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD). "To reduce the possibility of prosecution, farmers must demonstrate 'due diligence'. This means that all reasonable steps have been taken to prevent fuel related accidents from happening."

AAFRD and the United Farmers of Alberta (UFA) have jointly published a booklet, ***Storing & Handling Fuel on the Farm***. This booklet provides some very useful information on the subject for farmers and ranchers. It includes descriptions of the different types of storage tanks and covers ways of reducing the risks, emergency procedures and sources of additional information.

Storing & Handling Fuel on the Farm is a free publication available at all UFA petroleum agencies and at all AAFRD district offices.

Contact: John Chang
(403)427-4170

Ron Adam
UFA in Calgary
(403)258-4500

Sheep sales introduce info sessions

Livestock auctions are always popular places for buyers and producers to spend some time discussing the industry. They talk breeds, price, weights and numbers – but not usually topics like health, feeding programs, new research or extension services.

Sheep producers selling at Edmonton Stockyard Inc. are being offered something new at the monthly sales, ***Pre Sale Info Sessions***. Talks and demonstrations by guest speakers begin 30 minutes before the regular sale time of 1:30 p.m. and are organized by North Central Sheep and Goat Sales (NCSGS).

"Edmonton has always been regarded as one of the top sheep markets in Alberta and has always attracted a good number of buyers and sellers to special sales," says Jack Francis, chairman of the NCSGS. "This learning opportunity for producers is quickly becoming a very popular feature."

Topics covered to date include: care of the newborn lamb; shearing and preparing wool for market; and, starting your stock dog. "The most recent session started with 74 people on hand to hear Wray Whitmore, sheep specialist from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, give the latest information on care of ewes and lambs at weaning time, and a brief update on some of the sheep research projects currently being conducted in Lethbridge, Olds, Edberg and Edmonton," adds Francis.

Guest speakers and their topics are different each time and always deal with sheep and goat industry production and marketing. An information sheet is usually made available or included as part of the Sale Day News bulletin sent out regularly to over 400 individuals and businesses with a sheep or goat connection.

Contact: Jack Francis at (403)436-5992
Doug Laurie (secretary NCSGS) at (403)963-6711

Agri-News Briefs

Kinsella Research Ranch tour

The County of Beaver #9 and Municipal District of Wainwright #61 in cooperation with the University of Alberta, Ducks Unlimited, PFRA and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development are sponsoring the Kinsella Research Ranch tour on July 31, 1997. The tour includes an overview of U of A Ranch operations and current research projects; and presentations on prescribed pasture burning; rotational grazing and watering systems; and, native plants of the Parklands that bloom on the prairie. A B-B-Q lunch is offered as part of the day's activities. Pre-registration (before July 25, 1997) is $10 per person, late registration is $15. The bus leaves the Ryley Community Centre, Ryley, at 8:00 a.m. First stop is the Co-op Seed Cleaning Plant in Holden then on to Bruce and Viking. For more information or to register, contact the County of Beaver office (403)663-3730 or the M.D. of Wainwright office (403)842-4454.

Pork breeding management seminars

The Alberta Pork Research Centre is holding breeding management seminars for the industry. Locations for the three seminars are: Sven Erickson's Restaurant in Lethbridge on Thursday, July 31 at 1:30 to 4:00 p.m.; Lacombe Research Centre Auditorium in Lacombe on Friday, August 1 at 1:30 to 4:00 p.m.; and the Fellowship Hall at the Christian Reformed Church in Neerlandia on Tuesday, August 12 at 1:30 to 4:00 p.m. The seminars feature Dr. Nicolene Soede from the Wageningen Agricultural University in the Netherlands speaking on optimizing the time of mating, Dr. Roy Kirkwood from the Swine Research Group of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development speaking on improving breeding performance of the weaned sow, and Dr George Foxcroft from the University of Alberta speaking on gilt pool management and the start-up herd. The Alberta Pork Research Centre is a cooperative effort among Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, the University of Alberta and the Alberta Pork Producers Development Corporation to harmonize swine research in the province. For more information on the seminars, contact (403)427-5096. Dial 310-0000 first for toll-free access outside the Edmonton area.

Opportunities for rural processors

The updated version of the Packaged Goods on Food Processing planning guide was just released. The free publication provides helpful business and marketing information. From financing to regulations, it lists major contacts for the food industry. There are basically two options as a food processor, processing a food product in your home and selling it directly through Alberta Farmers' Markets or processing a food product in a licenced facility and selling it through other venues like trade shows, wholesale, food service industry, retail and other specialty food stores. Resources are available to help in the development of Alberta food businesses. For more information, contact your local rural development specialist – business with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, (403)782-3301. Dial 310-0000 first for toll-free access.

Weekly prices and weekly markets

Albertans who regularly access the ***Weekly Prices*** and ***Weekly Market – Call of the Land*** publications or those interested in viewing an issue can call it up on Internet. The Internet address is:

http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/weekup.html

When you access the site, the Weekly Market Summary – Call of the Land is viewed by clicking on the Weekly Market Summary link. The weekly is split into two sections, click on Weekly Grain Price Review for the grains section or click on Weekly Livestock Price Review for the livestock section. For further information, call Don Hansen, economic research and logistics branch of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development at (403)422-4056. Dial 310-0000 first for toll-free access outside of the Edmonton area.

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AGRI-NEWS
July 28, 1997

Farm Implement Board

Each year, over 100 cases representing considerable cash savings are heard and mitigated by the Farm Implement Act Administration. The Farm Implement Act was designed to protect farmers' financial investments in farm equipment and that translates to economic protection of the agricultural community. The Act also helps encourage competition between dealers and distributors of farm implements which gives Albertans greater choice.

"The Farm Implement Board, established in 1973, discusses matters related to the farm implement industry in Alberta and hears appeals from Albertans and Alberta companies affected by the Farm Implement Act ," says Dennis Budney, FIA inspector with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The Board also reports to and advises the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development on matters relating to farm machinery and matters arising from the operation of the Farm Implement Act."

The Farm Implement Board consists of seven members. Four members are farmers, at least one representing a farm based organization or association, and three represent the farm implement industry. Members are appointed to the Board for a three year term. To keep continuity on the board, two new farmer members and one or two industry members are appointed every two years; leaving experienced members on the board at all times.

Current Board members are:

- Bill Neis, Chairman, farmer – Mirror
- Maurice Francoeur, retail dealer – Camrose
- Clem Kuelker, manufacturer's representative – Didsbury
- Rodney Rockarts, farmer – Clairmont
- Richard Stamp, farmer – Enchant
- Bernie von Tettenborn, farmer – Round Hill, and
- Gary Harris, whole sale representative – Red Deer

"The Board studies and makes recommendations on farm implement trade practices, farm implement finance practices, supply of equipment and service parts to the trade, safety and farm implements, standardizing of farm implements and the testing and evaluating of farm implements," adds Budney.

A brochure describing the Farm Implement Act and the role of the Board in detail is available from the Farm Implement Act Administration, #305, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6, or by calling (403)427-2188.

Contact:	*Dennis J. Budney*	*Bill Neis*
	(403)427-2188	*(403)788-2166*

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

Members shine at the Provincial 4-H Beef Heifer Show

Members from 67 clubs across the province helped celebrate the 21st anniversary of the *Provincial 4-H Beef Heifer Show* in Bashaw, July 13-15, 1997.

"We had 276 4-H members and 303 head for the 1997 show. In total there were 85 4-Hers in the freshman competitions for first time show participants," says Henry Wiegman, Agriculture Specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD). Freshman classes are based 60 per cent on the members' showmanship skills and 40 per cent on their animal's conformation.

While it may have been their first time at the provincial event, freshman competitors proved they knew their way around a show ring. Top senior freshman honors went to Sheila Wilson of the Bashaw 4-H Beef Club and Kyle Westman of the Preston 4-H Beef Club won the intermediate freshman title. Junior freshman champion Tanis Longshore of Byemoor 4-H Beef Club also teamed with clubmate Kari Rairdan to claim reserve champion in the junior grooming competition.

The three-day competition opened with team grooming events. Senior winners were the brother and sister team of Matthew and Jocelynne Gosling of the Bow Valley 4-H Beef Club. Intermediate winners of the grooming competition went to Bryce Sutter of Battle River 4-H Beef and Angela Chromik of Wavy Lake 4-H Beef. The Armena 4-H Beef Club's April Fox and Ashley Fox took the top Junior award.

The project bowl teams battled it out on Sunday evening. Competition was tough. Intermediate team honors went to Virginia Lourance of Altario 4-H Beef Club, Morwenna Hodgetts of Camrose 4-H Beef Club, Jennifer Pattison of St. Paul 4-H Multi Club and Dan Vanderwell of Whiterose 4-H Beef Club and Multi Club. Scott Bodell of Fort Saskatchewan 4-H Beef Club, Steven Phillips of Chipman 4-H Beef Club, Todd Kettleson of Cherhill 4-H Beef Club and Crystal Young of Lin-Berry Buck 4-H Beef Club made up the top Junior Project Bowl team. The senior team of Matthew Gosling of Bow Valley 4-H Beef Club, Stephanie Edge of Jumping Pound 4-H Beef Club, Sherry Ronsko of Holden 4-H Beef Club and Derek Sutter of Battle River 4-H Beef Club, proved they knew a lot about the beef industry by taking top honors in the Senior Project Bowl Competition.

Judging, freshman and showmanship competitions were held during the second day. The top junior individual judge was Crystal Young of Lin-Berry Buck 4-H Beef Club. Amy Johanson of Lakedell 4-H Beef Club was the top overall intermediate judge and placed fifth overall in the judging competition. In the senior judging class, Derek Sutter of the Battle River 4-H Beef Club received the top senior individual judge, the top overall reasons and was awarded the Supreme Overall Judge.

A special feature of the judging classes is the show ring competition where the team members act as judge and ringman in a live show ring. Bryce and Derek Sutter claimed the senior show ring judging title. Along with the reserve champion team of Kate Kroetsch of Hastings Coulee 4-H Beef Club and Sherry Ronsko of Holden 4-H Beef Club they'll represent Alberta at the Western Canadian Livestock Finals, August 14-17, 1997. The top junior honors went to Robyn Mader of West Carstairs 4-H Beef Club and Cayley Cunningham of Three Hills Ghost Pine 4-H Beef Club. Crystal and Stacy Young of Lin-Berry Buck 4-H Beef Club were the reserve grand champion junior team. These top two junior teams will also represent Alberta at the Western Canadian Livestock Finals.

Tanis Longshore of Byemoor 4-H Beef Club was the top junior freshman. Longshore also took top honors in the junior showmanship competition. The intermediate freshman honors went to Kyle Westman of the Preston 4-H Beef Club and Bashaw Beef Club's Sheila Wilson was the top senior freshman. The Intermediate showmanship winner was Logan Wray of Irricana 4-H Beef Club and top senior honors went to Derek Sutter of Battle River 4-H Beef Club.

The final show day featured conformation classes. Two rings were in action given the 303 head of cattle entered in the classes. The supreme crossbred winner was Alison Fehlauer of Calmar Heart of the Country club. Fehlauer's senior yearling, a Gelbvieh cross heifer took the crossbred championship over Andrea Dundas' two year old Simmental cross cow with a February calf at foot.

A yearling claimed the top spot in the overall purebred championship. Sarah Northeys Black Angus was the supreme grand champion, with Crystal Young's two year old cow with a February calf at foot was the reserve supreme champion.

Calmar Heart of the Country Club claimed the herdmanship title for the second year in a row. Second place went to Lakedell 4-H Beef Club and third place went to Bon Accord 4-H Beef Club.

The Grand Aggregate Awards were awarded based on points awarded to members for achievement and participation in all events. Ashley Fox of Armena 4-H Beef Club was the top junior, Jackie Oberg of Edberg 4-H Beef Club was the top intermediate and the top senior from Hastings Coulee 4-H Beef Club was Kate Kroetsch. Based on aggregate points, the top two juniors (9-14 years of age) Ashley Fox and Scott Bodell will join the top two seniors, Kate Kroetsch and Alison Fehlauer, in representing Alberta at the "National Young Cattleman of the Year" program.

The annual provincial show is sponsored by Alberta Treasury Branches and UFA, hosted by the Bashaw Agricultural Society and administered by AAFRD.

Contact:	*Henry Wiegman*	*Robyn Dow*
	(403)422-4H4H	*(403)422-4H4H*

Provincial 4-H dairy members showcase projects

Two-thirds of Alberta's 4-H dairy clubs sent members to the fifty-first Provincial 4-H Dairy Show. Members gathered in Red Deer Alberta to participate in activities showcasing their 4-H project skills.

"A total of 55 delegates exhibiting 80 livestock, participated in judging, clipping, project bowl, showmanship and conformation classes. These events are sponsored by the dairy industry," notes Henry Wiegman, Alberta Agriculture provincial 4-H agriculture specialist.

First day activities saw Linsey Chalack of the Mountainview 4-H Dairy club win the overall judge award in the dairy judging contest plus participate on the winning project bowl and judging teams. Dereck Van Sickle also of Mountain View participated on the same teams plus he captured the overall clipping award.

Lacombe 4-H Club member Sandra Simanton was the top junior judge with fellow club member Alexis DeWitt capturing the top Intermediate judging award. DeWitt and Simanton along with fellow Lacombe members Ryan Roland and Andrew Wildeboer captured second place honours in the team project bowl. The Rollyview 4-H Dairy team of Trevor Hofstra, Matthew Hofstra and Jason Rietveld won second in the team judging contest with Rietveld also placing third in overall judging reasons.

"Day two began with the show ring judging contest where the team members act as judge and ringman in a live show ring situation," adds Wiegman. "Placing first was Dereck Van Sickle and Christian Linved-Jensen of the Mountain View club while Linsey Chalack and Caden Chalack also from Mountain View placed second."

In the showmanship competition Sarah Ronald of Lacombe placed first in juniors, fellow Lacombe member Alexis DeWitt won the intermediate age category and senior member Linsey Chalack of Mountainview captured the senior category plus went on to win the overall showman award.

A September yearling from Craig Fenske of Usona was declared supreme show championship. The supreme reserve show champion was the summer yearling exhibited by Christan Linved-Jensen. Other conformation class winners included Dereck Van Sickle of Mountain View with the intermediate calf, September calf and junior yearling champions and Andrew Wildeboer of Lacombe with the top winter yearling.

Club herd was won by the Mountain View Dairy Club and the Lacombe Club won the club herdsmanship competition.

The provincial 4-H dairy show is sponsored by the Alberta Dairy Industry and is held in conjunction with the Red Deer Westerner during *Westerner Days*.

Contact: Henry Wiegman (403)422-4444

Trees and soil conservation

Removing trees from land can cause water and wind erosion of soil, affect water tables and wildlife, change landscape aesthetics and have economic consequences

"Trees are a part of the agriculture conservation picture," says Douwe Vanderwel, soil and water conservation engineer with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The effects of logging have come to the forefront with changing technology in the pulp and paper industry. Poplar trees are now considered a valuable source of fiber. Albertans who had land with poplar bush suddenly saw their land value triple."

Vanderwel deals with many agroforestry issues. One of those issues is the relationship between conservation and logging on private land. When trees suddenly had considerable cash value, land owners began to explore their options.

"There are basically three options open to land owners: managing the woodlot, developing the land for traditional agricultural production and simply clearing the timber," says Vanderwel. "Managing the woodlot is certainly the most desirable option.

Since its formation, the Woodlot Association of Alberta has assumed a role in promoting sustainable development of private woodlots in the province. Through workshops, including a major policy conference last fall, the association provides information about selective harvesting, the practical economics of forest farming and the non-market value of trees.

"Whatever a landowner decides to do, harvesting trees is a long-term decision with long-term consequences especially for the soil," adds Vanderwel. "Fortunately, there's information and people who can help farmers and other land owners make the decisions that will work for their operation."

The booklet ***Conservation and Logging on Private Land in Alberta***, co-authored by Vanderwel, is available from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district offices and the publications office, main floor 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6.

Another short pamphlet, ***Logging Private Land in Alberta*** explains timber harvesting options. For more information about the Woodlot Association of Alberta and its activities, contact the office toll-free at 1-800-871-5670 or 424-0286 in Edmonton.

Contact: Douwe Vanderwel
(403) 427-3629

Agri-food imports

Alberta, as well as exporting billions of dollars worth of agricultural products, imports processed agricultural and food products from many countries. The value of Alberta's imports in 1995 was estimated at about $1.06 billion, a 4.7 per cent increase over the 1994 value of $1.01 billion.

"Traditionally, Alberta's agri-food imports have consisted of noncompetitive commodities that are either not produced in the province or not produced in quantities large enough to meet demand," says Barbara Pekalski, acting trade statistician, statistics and production economics branch, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

In 1995, fruits, vegetables, including pulses such as peas, beans and lentils, and preparations thereof, accounted for 33.8 per cent of total imports and were the largest category.

"Imports of coffee, tea, cocoa, spices and other food materials and food preparations amounted to almost $187 million," says Pekalski. "Imports of live animals and meats declined to just under $100 million from $102.5 million in 1994."

Whiskey, wine, beer and other alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverage imports amounted to $100.1 million. Cereals and cereal products amounted to $89.9 million.

"Fish and other aquatic animals imports totaled $71.9 million," adds Pekalski. "The largest increase, 14.2 per cent, was recorded in imports of aquatic animals and fish."

Overall, Alberta accounted for 8.1 per cent of Canada's 1995 agricultural and food products import total of $13.2 billion. The major sources of agricultural and food commodities imported into the province included the U.S., Mexico, Australia, the United Kingdom and France. About $780 million worth of imports originated in these five countries. The largest increase, 22.3 per cent, occurred in imports from Mexico.

For complete statistics or additional information, contact market analysis and statistics, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, (403)427-4011.

The publication ***Alberta's Agri-food Imports 1995*** contains statistics on all categories of agri-food imports. For a copy, call the statistics and production economics branch of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development at (403)427-4011. Dial 310-0000 first for toll-free access outside the Edmonton area.

Contact: Barbara Pekalski
(403)427-5386

4-H leadership through counseling

From June 30 to July 4, 1997, 83 senior 4-H members from across Alberta gathered for a fun filled week of extensive leadership and communications training at the ***Leadership Through Counseling Seminar*** (LTCS) held at the Alberta 4-H Centre, Battle Lake. Delegates engaged in various group challenges, sessions, new program games, and made many news friendships over the week.

This year's summer programs are based on the theme of ***4-H: Life's Bookmark***. LTCS helped the delegates understand the developmental needs of youth, learn programming skills, understand their role as a future counselor and become involved in various sessions. The sessions this year included emergency situations, first aid, communications, teaching skills, group skills, and self awareness.

"Delegates gained confidence in themselves and in what they could do for others," says Nicol Stone, 4-H summer staff. "Everyone made new 4-H friends. The week was extremely successful and very well received."

LTCS was a week of informative and educational activities, fun and new friendships. Next the counselors embark on another week long adventure in a position of responsibility and as friends at camps that host up to 80 4-H members between the ages of nine and 14.

LTCS is sponsored by Wetaskiwin Co-operative Association Ltd. and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. These sponsors' generosity gives many 4-H youth the chance to attend this program for a reasonable fee. Their support is definitely a reflection of their dedication to the 4-H program and of their belief in the future of 4-H youth. Their support and commitment to the 4-H programs and its youth is appreciated by all members.

"Every 4-Her should experience LTCS," says Allan Bartolcic, 4-H summer staff. "It gives delegates a sense of individualism and accomplishment."

This leadership program is an excellent opportunity for 4-H members 16 years old or older to meet new 4-H friends and develop leadership skills through counseling experiences. For more information on this and other 4-H programs, contact the regional 4-H specialist. It's not to early to be planning to attend LTCS in 1998.

Contact: Marguerite Stark
(403)948-8510

Agri-News Briefs

Steer-A-Year 1997

The results are in from the 1997 steer-a-year feeding trial. A total of 109 steers were fed out at McDowell's feedlot, west of Ponoka. This year's steers fed very well. The average weight of the cattle at the start of the test, on November 18, 1996, was 732 pounds. The average finish weight was 1208 pounds. Average days on feed was 162, resulting in an average daily gain of 2.94 pounds. The cost of gain on the trial was $0.64/lb., not including interest and treatments received during the feeding period. Average net profit of feeding the cattle, before interest, was $77.84. The goal of the steer-a-year project is to provide producers with an opportunity to learn more about their cattle and fain experience with retained ownership. This year, 17 producers contributed calves. Included in the 1997 trials was live animal evaluation research that included infrared thermography and ultrasound as well as an electrolyte or Nutri-charge supplementation. For further information on the steer-a-year trial, contact Brian Koberstein, beef specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, (403)361-1240 or your local beef specialist.

Hobby greenhouses

With a small greenhouse, avid gardeners can extend the growing season and expand what they can grow. Whether interested in flowers, vegetables, ornamentals or foliage plants, a greenhouse makes it possible to produce plants that could not otherwise grow in Alberta. The recently updated publication ***Hobby Greenhouses in Alberta*** contains information and illustrations to make constructing a small greenhouse easy. To give simple basic instructions on the building, heating and management of a small greenhouse suitable for the amateur, topics covered include: design to suit different locals, size, construction, soil, heating, energy conservation, watering systems and lighting systems. Cost of the 64-page booklet is $8, plus GST (add $2 plus GST for shipping and handling). Copies are available from the publications office, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6 or by calling toll-free 1-800-292-5697.

Seminar on the United Nations and International Affairs

Two Alberta 4-H members have the chance to explore the political, economic, and social dynamics of international affairs with diplomats from the United Nations, Canadian Foreign Affairs, and International Trade! Amy Vidal of Vermilion and Trisha Burger of Stony Plain are attending the 45th annual Seminar on the United Nations and International Affairs (SUNIA) held at the Goldeye Centre, near Nordegg, Alberta. Vidal participates in Session A, from August 17-22 and Burger will partake in Session B, August 24-29, 1997. This programme revolves around a security council simulation, and includes other focuses on international development, multiculturalism, and global communication. The 140 student delegates will also enjoy exciting and relaxing recreational activities at the seminar. SUNIA is a summer conference that, since 1952, offers global education to high school students across Canada. Vidal and Burger received this award trip at the 1997 Provincial Selections Program. Trip awards are based on interpersonal skills, 4-H and community involvement. The Calgary Exhibition and Stampede has provided this opportunity through their sponsorship. Their continued support for 4-H and belief in the future of our youth and is greatly appreciated. For more information, contact Marguerite Stark, provincial 4-H programs specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, (403)948-8510.

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AGRI-NEWS

August 4, 1997

On the prairies, opportunities are blooming

As grains, grasses, flowers, herbs and spices grow, ripen and bloom, opportunities bloom right along with them. Crops such as caraway seed, Echinacea root, seeds of Alberta wild flowers and sunflowers are just a few examples of high value crops.

"Life style changes that include adding herbs and teas to the diet are creating some very interesting and exciting market demands," says Anita Lunden, Farm Business Management Institute (FBMI) provincial coordinator with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Herbs such as oregano, dill, basil, chives and mints are marketable, fresh, dried and oil extracts. As these new alternate crops are tested, we are learning which crops may do well in different areas of the province, how to cultivate and harvest the many varieties to get the optimal yield possible and how to process them."

Businesses, such as *Blooming Prairie* in Edmonton, have seen the need for a centralized marketing and distribution system and have stepped in to provide growers an easily accessible market for a vast number of alternate crops.

"Grains and grasses grown and harvested for the ornamental flower market is one opportunity to increase returns," says Katie Benschop, Blooming Prairie. "Standard field crops like oats, wheat and timothy are basics in the dried flower community. These grains, when harvested for ornamental use, can yield up to $4,000 per acre. Cultivation of flowers for fresh and dried sales is yet another ongoing market that has constant needs."

To help Albertans interested in growing both limited or large quantities of special crops, five ***Alberta's Extra Special Crops*** seminars are being held throughout the province. The seminars are sponsored by the FBMP in cooperation with *Blooming Prairie*. Dates and locations are:

- August 16, 1997 – Lloydminster
- August 30 – Rocky Mountain House
- September 20 – Strathmore
- October 11 – Pincher Creek
- October 31 – Consort

Each seminar features four sessions. These sessions deal with the topics medicinal and culinary herbs; native plants and their seeds; ornamental grains and grasses; and, flowers for fresh cuts or drying. The seminar in Strathmore includes a session on marketing *Extra Special Crops*.

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

Registration, payable in advance, is $25 for a half-day (two sessions) or $45 for a full day. There is a discount for couples. Lunch is available at an additional $5 cost. To register, contact Blooming Prairie (403)431-1451, Edmonton; fax (403)433-6440; or e-mail blooming@superiway.net.

Contact:	*Anita Lunden* *(403)556-4278*	*Katie Benschop* *(403)431-1451*

Alberta requests grain transportation review

Alberta's Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development wants the federal government to act quickly to address the problems with the grain handling and transportation system.

Ed Stelmach has released a copy of a letter he sent to the federal Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the Minister of Transportation and the Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board.

The attached letter and terms of reference for the review identify the major areas that the western Premiers believe need to be included as part of any review. Those areas were identified at the annual Western Premiers' conference on May 29-30, 1997 in Campbell River, B.C.

"The farmers ultimately pay the cost of disruptions in the system through costs such as demurrage and penalties for deferred sales," said Mr. Stelmach. "They should not have to shoulder the burden any longer."

The Government of Alberta believes that the crisis in the grain handling and transportation system will not be resolved until the structural problems are addressed. The western Premiers want the review to include an assessment of the cost and operations of the current system, the barriers to efficiency and ways to increase the accountability of the players involved.

"Regulations and barriers within the system not only affect performance, they also have a detrimental effect on the development of a value-added industry in western Canada," said Mr. Stelmach.

Alberta led the call for a review of the entire grain handling and transportation system at the national meeting of Agriculture Ministers in Trois Rivieres, Quebec, earlier this month. At that time, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Lyle Vanclief, indicated that a repeat of last winter's transportation problems would not be acceptable.

The provincial Ministers want the federal government to act quickly on the terms of reference and initiate a review process. It is anticipated that required changes would be put in place for the beginning of the 1998-1999 crop year.

Contact:	*Elaine Williams Allin* *(403) 427-2145*	*Doug Radke* *(403) 427-2137*

Ropin' the Web roping the awards

At the 1997 Premier's Award of Excellence event, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Internet website, ***Ropin' The Web*** was the Silver recipient. The award honors the Ropin' The Web (RTW) team for providing superior customer service and being an example of effective business support.

"The compelling drive behind RTW is to provide an agriculture and agri-food information and services resource and use Internet technology to make a huge library of information available at the punch of a few keys to all Albertans," says Ron Weisenburger, RTW project manager with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "When we first started, in late 1995, it was a challenging learning curve but the team was determined to meet that challenge and exceed expectations."

RTW is billed as the greatest aggie Internet site in the world. It provides extensive, high-quality agricultural information and direct communication with department staff. The site is set-up so that even on the first on-line visit, it's easy to find your way around. RTW is organized on a content basis. Sections include: what's new; coming events; daily updates; weekly/monthly updates; crops; livestock; food and Ag processing; about the Ministry; rural development; department publications; agriculture sites; interesting sites; general Ag sciences; trade; Alberta Advantage; and, the General Store.

"We have a Rule of Clicks on the site," adds Weisenburger. "Users must be able to access information on the fourth click. It's a feature that really cuts down on the frustration factor and that is important to the team. If information is too hard to access or takes too long to get to, users won't use the system. For specific topics, the site's search engine is a quick and easy tool.

"The Ropin' The Web site can be viewed at
http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/
From there you're a couple of clicks away from an amazing amount of agriculture information. Key you later!"

Contact:	*Ron Weisenburger* *(403)422-1821*	*Darwin Daviduk* *(403)427-2101*

Blister beetles in Canola

Blister beetles have been reported in several southern Alberta canola fields. These bright, metallic and iridescent beetles land in large swarms of mating adults.

"Blister beetles are voracious feeders but fortunately, the swarms usually cover only a few patches in a field," says Gordon Frank, crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, in Brooks. "They eat foliage, flowers and even pods. The insects are very unpredictable and a large swarm present one day can be gone the next. For this reason, spraying is seldom required."

The beetles seem to scare easily. Irrigating, walking or driving through them or even a change in the wind can cause them to leave.

Large blister beetles, of about 25 mm in length, are near the end of their feeding period. Adults emerge in June, mate, lay eggs and die. The larvae hatch from eggs in summer, overwinter as larvae and molt again in spring, pupate and come out as adults in June.

"Adult blister beetles prefer canola, alfalfa, caragana and other legume plants," says Frank. "They are actually a beneficial insect most of the time as the larvae feed on grasshopper eggs in the soil. It's only when they are swarming that they can cause yield loss in crops."

If blister beetles are spotted in fields, they should be watched closely. If a major attack is occurring control must be done immediately. A broad spectrum insecticide registered for canola would be appropriate, if needed. In most cases, however, the attack is spotty enough that control over a whole field may not be necessary.

Contact: Gordon Frank
(403)362-1212

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Horticulture tour highlights opportunities

Rural development specialists Sharon Homeniuk, Kerry Engel and Janice McGregor organized a tour for producers who are seriously considering diversifying into a fruit or vegetable operation. Participants visited Eldon Galloway's Everlasting Treasures, a u-pick strawberry operation just south of Fort Saskatchewan, Riverbend Gardens, owned and operated by Doug Visser, situated in a bend of the North Saskatchewan River north of Edmonton, and Shirley Alton's A-5 Berry Farm, east of Edmonton. The tour was an opportunity for participants to gain an understanding of the specialized equipment needed in production, pricing considerations and marketing concerns of these different horticultural operations. A special feature of the day's activities was a presentation by Betty Vladicka, horticulture marketing officer, on marketing channels. The pros and cons of both direct and wholesale options were discussed. For further information, contact Sharon Homeniuk (403)963-6101 in Stony Plain, Kerry Engel (403)349-4465 in Westlock or Janice McGregor (403)939-4351 in Morinville.

Echinacea production workshop

On Wednesday, August 13, at the Brooks Campus of Medicine Hat College, the Alberta Greenhouse Growers Association and the Canadian Herb Society-Alberta Branch, are sponsoring an Echinacea production workshop. The workshop will cover topics such as: enhancing germination, diseases, greenhouse production and field production. The workshop wraps up with a tour of the research trials being conducted at the Crop Diversification Centre - South. The cost of the workshop is $53.50 per person (includes GST). Space is limited and early registration is advised. For further information or to register, contact Mohyuddin Mirza at (403)422-1789. Dial 310-000 first for toll-free access outside the Edmonton area.

California 4-H Exchange

Alison Fehlauer of Devon and Ryan Halun of Radway participated in the California 4-H Exchange. During the exchange, Fehlauer and Halun had the opportunity to experience 4-H programming in California, visit with other 4-H members, and exchange ideas. Fehlauer and Halun were selected as award trip recipients at the 1997 Provincial Selections Program. Award trips are based on 4-H and community involvement, as well as interpersonal skills. The sponsor of this program is the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce. CIBC's commitment to the 4-H Program and members is greatly appreciated. On August 1st, 1997, CIBC hosted a send-off banquet, in Edmonton, for Fehlauer and Halun. There, CIBC presented the 4-Hers with their plane tickets. Later that afternoon, the delegates flew to California, where they attended the "4-H State Leadership Conference" at the University of California in San Diego from August 2-5th, 1997. The conference's goals are to involve youth in the process of addressing issues, enhance feelings of self-worth in youth, and to improve leadership skills. Fehlauer and Halun spent 4 days at the Cohen residence in Garden Valley California, where they enjoyed being a part of a new culture and lifestyle through their host family stay. They returned home on August 9th, 1997. For more information, contact Marguerite Stark, provincial 4-H programs specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, (403)948-8510.

CANADIANA

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AGRI-NEWS

August 11, 1997

400 farm experts attend international farm congress

The 11th International Farm Management Congress in Calgary, July 14 to 19, 1997, drew close to 400 delegates from Canada, the U.S., Japan, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, South America and Africa.

"The congress theme, ***Managing into the 21st Century***, is a subject farm managers from around the world can identify with," says Terry Murray, chair of the Canadian Farm Business Management Council (CFBMC). "Farmers everywhere face an unprecedented number of challenges in changing technology, information transfer and global competition. The Congress was an excellent opportunity to pick up business tips from the best farm managers in the world."

The message from leading farm managers was the same: the future of farms will depend on the ability of farm managers to operate more efficiently.

The Congress, held every two years in a different city of the world, took place at the University of Calgary. It was organized by a team from industry, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD) and universities and Olds College. Major support came from the CFBMC and AAFRD.

The next Congress will be held in Durban, South Africa (south of Johannesburg) from July 19 to 24, 1999. The theme for the next Congress is ***Think Globally, Farm Locally***. A 1999 Congress website is being set up and is expected to be on-line shortly. Bookmark the site at

http://www.kwanalu.co.za/ifma/ifma99.htm

Contact: Anita Lunden
(403)556-4278

Precision farming – the key to farm profits

American farm management consultant, Jay Smith of Smith Farms, Indiana, told delegates at the 11th International Farm Management Congress that precision farming will be the key to farm profits in the years ahead.

Sophisticated site-specific computer systems such as the GPS-2000 can gather yield data every minute as

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a combine harvests. Probes sent into the soil assess the quality of the soil and determine where fertilizer is needed and where it's not.

"The real pay-off here is not having to buy excessive fertilizer," says Smith. "One example is a 266-acre corn and soyabean farm that saved $5,000 in lime calcium. Without the data collected from the computer system, unnecessary lime would have been purchased and used."

A word of caution about precision farming was given by Smith – computer systems can take a long time to properly configure and learn how to use. "It took me a while to find the right combination of hardware and software, and then learn how it all worked, and I'm not sure the system is yet working the way I want it to," he says.

However, end results have brought Smith to the conclusion that the trouble is well worth it. He stated that he quickly recovered the $11,500 spent on precision farm computer equipment and is now saving considerable money on fertilizer purchases not to mention his time.

"For farm managers patient enough to undergo the learning curve, the end result is well worth it," adds Smith.

Contact: Anita Lunden – (403)556-4278

Seven 4-H regions represented at 1997 Horse Classic

From Grande Prairie to Warner, 154 horse enthusiasts and 90 volunteer leaders representing 35 Alberta 4-H light horse clubs met in Olds for the third annual Provincial 4-H Horse Classic.

"The program focus encourages participation," says Henry Wiegman, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development provincial 4-H agriculture specialist. "4-H members compare horse knowledge, enhance their skills and have opportunities to socialize with other 4-H horse project members. This is the first year we've had representation from all seven 4-H regions in the province."

Contests were for both individuals and teams. Everyone who registered was automatically entered in the hippology contest. This tested members' equine knowledge through five phases – knowledge stations, live horse judging, identification stations, a quiz and team problems.

The top four senior members – based on individual hippology points – qualified for the Denver Western 4-H Horse Classic Award Trip, January 7 to 12, 1998, sponsored by Lammle's Western Wear. They are: Leanne Folton from Bow River Riders, Susann McGowan from Killiam Light Horse, Rhianne Weghnnar and Erin Dunkle both from Rainbow Riders.

Folton was the top senior in the hippology contest. Top intermediate was Shelli Paulsen of the Rainbow Riders and top junior, Tamara Quaschnick of the Berry Creek Light Horse Club. The top junior hippology team was Charlene Buit from Triple R Riders, Brandi Judson from Gilby Light Horse, Kara Kykstra from West Valley Light Horse and Jasmyn Vierboom from the Hanna Prairie Riders. The Harink sisters, Stepanie and Jeramie form Triple R Riders along with Susann McGowan from Killam Light Horse and Darcy Erion of Coronation Range Riders made up the top senior team.

The brother and sister team of Jacob and Ginger Michaelchuk took top honors in the junior team demonstration competition. The top intermediate team from Villenuve Riders was Krysta Pettitt and Amanda Winder and the top senior team was Vicki Crowson and Becca Habraaken from Circle V Multi.

Top junior in the individual demonstration contest was Yolanda Steinbach from Bassano Light Horse, Stephanie Godson from Warner Multi was the top intermediate and Kyley Johanson from the Lakedell 4-H Horse Club took the seniors honors.

Bow River Riders club members, Jennifer Folton, Leanne Folton, Anya Howard and Karly Procknow, made up the winning Horse Bowl team.

Due to increased interest in the marketing competition, delegates were divided into six different age categories. The top 9 to 11 year-old was Shannon Clarahan of Meadowview Multi, Tamara Quaschnick of Berry Creek Light Horse was top in the 12 year-old category, top 13 year-old was Christina Toews of Hanna Prairie Riders, top 14 year-old Shelli Paulsen and top 15 year-old Rhianne Weghnnar were both from Rainbow Riders, and placing first in the 16 to 20 year-old category was Bow River Riders' Leanna Folton.

"Major program patrons of the 1997 Provincial Horse Classic held at Olds College from July 30 to August 1, were Lammle's Western Wear, United Farmers of Alberta and Airdrie Trailer Sales Ltd. Without the generous support of our many sponsors this annual 4-H horse project event would not be possible," says Wiegman.

Contact: Henry Wiegman – (403)422-4H4H

Cows needed

This fall a four-year beef cow research project at the University of Alberta farm in Ellerslie is scheduled to begin. The project is a joint venture between Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, the U of A and the Western Beef & Forage Group in Lacombe.

"Winter feeding of the beef cow is the single most important cost in cow-calf production, averaging 30 per cent of total costs of average Alberta production costs in 1994," says Brian Koberstein, beef specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "As a member of the research team, I'm very excited about the worked planned."

It is estimated that 70 to 75 per cent of feed consumed by cows is used for fetal development and lactation. Evidence suggests that the amount of feed required to maintain individual cows can differ by 50 per cent. For these reasons, it is apparent that attention must be paid to differences between cows in winter feed costs if the productivity of individual cows within herds is compared.

"Even though we know that breed and individual differences do exist within a herd, the only way we have of estimating winter feed requirements is on the basis of weight," says Koberstein. "This research program is being initiated to measure the variability in winter feed requirements of Alberta beef cows and to develop ways of predicting differences between cows for this characteristic."

For the program, 200 beef cows are being obtained from interested producers. The cows will be allotted to treatment pens on the basis of size, backfat thickness and adjusted weaning weight of last year's calves.

"For this program to be successful, we need interested producers to get involved," adds Koberstein.

Benefits to producers include:

- obtain detailed information on their cows and overall project result
- be able to benchmark feeding program
- be able to compare test cows to the balance of their herd with regard to requirements
- be directly involved with industry leading research
- contribute to the improvement of the beef industry's competitiveness

The program will accept four to 10 cows per producer. Producers will pay an average industry daily feeding cost to help cover costs. Health costs will be covered by the project. For more information or to become involved with the program, contact Koberstein at (403)361-1240 in Wetaskiwin.

Contact: Brian Koberstein – (403)361-1240

Be daring, be different and reap the rewards

Product differentiation can help many farm businesses carve their spot in a niche market and expand the market possibilities for Alberta producers and processors.

"The world's taste buds have never been more desirous of variation," says Dr. Kirk Klein, Department of Economics, University of Lethbridge. "More people are looking for something different. In North America - Thai, Mexican, German and foods from other cultures are gaining considerably in popularity."

In Japan, the appetite is also very strong for variation. Klein said *Coca Cola* now markets a sweeter tasting soft drink for southern Japan because studies show that is what people there prefer. In England, sheep products are marketed specifically for the preferences of buyers in Spain and Greece.

"One of the great things about product differentiation is that people are prepared to pay a higher price," adds Klein. "To use the garment industry as an example, the label on the back of a pair of jeans can mean a huge difference in price."

Process technologies have aided the differentiation trend. It's now possible to freeze and transport products around the world with product shelf-life often reaching 100 days or more. This change in technology alone allows farmers to create a wider range of specialization.

At the 11th International Farm Management Congress, Klein challenged farm managers to study cultural preferences and capitalize on them.

Contact: Anita Lunden – (403)556-4278

Outlook Agri-Food expands to six cities in '98

The George Morris Centre and the Bank of Montreal are doubling the Outlook Agri-Food locations for the 1997 conference. Now in its third year, ***Outlook Agri-Food '98***, a national series of agricultural economic conferences, is being held in six cities.

The 1997 conference theme is ***Emerging Export Markets***. The program includes economic, grains and oilseeds, livestock, and sector outlooks specific to each province. A unique session being featured combines a keynote outlook address on emerging export markets along with profiles of local agricultural organizations that have been successful in identifying and seizing export opportunities.

"Outlook Agri-Food conferences provide something for all producers and processors," says Alan Hall, field services regional director, with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The conference deals with economics and market opportunities right through the value-chain, not just prices for one commodity at one particular time. Last year, everyone came away with information to help them plan for the next fiscal for their specific business or make future plans for diversification."

Outlook Agri-Food '98 will be held from December 3 to 18, 1997 in four provinces. Corporate partners are the George Morris Centre, Canada's only independent think-tank dedicated to policy research and education in the agri-food sector, and the Bank of Montreal. Provincial partners include: Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Agriculture institute of Management Saskatchewan (AIMS), Manitoba Agriculture and Food, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs, and the Ontario Agricultural Leadership Alumni. The partners will help ensure that the national program reflects the key issues of each province.

The conference series goes beyond the traditional agricultural outlook seminars by providing insight, analysis and forecasts on all segments of the agri-food industry in Canada.

Dates and locations for Outlook Agri-Food '98 are:

- December 3, 1997 – Lethbridge
- December 5, 1997 – Red Deer
- December 8, 1997 – Saskatoon, SK
- December 10, 1997 – Winnipeg, MB
- December 16, 1997 – Kemptville, ON
- December 18, 1997 – Kitchener, ON

A toll-free information line has been set-up to provide easy access to additional information on the conference, 1-800-206-0391.

Contact: Alan Hall – (403)340-7611

4-H Clubs seize the day

4-H clubs from across Alberta selected and sent delegates to Olds, July 21 to 26, 1997 to discover how to ***Seize the Day***. 145 senior 4-H members participated in personal development sessions, group challenges and motivational activities, all part of **Club Week 1997**. The outstanding program was sponsored by United Grain Growers, Lammle's Western Wear, Alberta Pool and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

"The Club Week theme was ***Between the Bookends***. Bookends represent flexibility and the building of a library of life experiences which can be added to and drawn from over the course of one's existence," says Marguerite Stark, provincial 4-H program specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "4-H members explored the meaning of this theme in small group sessions. Session topics included family, self awareness, friendship, values and Canada. Carolyn Arends' song "Seize the Day" captured the energy of participants and became the 1997 Club Week theme song."

A highlight of Club Week was the Celebration of Diversity. It was during this evening that delegates met a number of inspirational individuals. This year, tornado survivor Wade Cooper, Aboriginal mountain climber Paulette Fox, visually impaired speaker Ella Iantkow, and hearing impaired couple Robin and Sean Demko related dynamic accounts of their life challenges and experiences. The encounter had a significant impact on each of the 4-H members and staff.

Many Club Week events were planned by the delegates. 4-H'ers used their leadership and organization skills to arrange the mini-Olympics, masquerade dance, morning news and exercises, banquet and final dance. Participation in physical and leisure activities such as volleyball, soccer, candle and angel making, allowed the members to use their creativity and energy. There was no shortage of enthusiasm either!

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"This is a special program," adds Stark. "Club Week is often a life changing experience for the individuals who have the opportunity to attend."

The fantasy journey on the last day revisited the events of the past week and encouraged the delegates to continue to make the most of each day once the program was over. Club Week is an annual program for 4-H members 15 to 21 years of age.

Contact: Marguerite Stark – (403) 948-8510

Agri-News Briefs

Alberta's 1996 exports

International trade statistics show that Alberta's exports of primary agriculture, food and beverage products continue to grow, reaching $4.4 billion in 1996. This represents an increase of 6.0 per cent from $4.2 billion in 1995, and a 44.5 per cent increase from $3.1 billion in 1992. Exports of value-added processed products ($1.6 billion) rose faster than exports of raw commodities (animals and crops), at 12.6 per cent and 2.3 per cent, respectively. Alberta accounted for 23.8 per cent of Canadian total agri-food exports valued at $18.6 billion. In 1996, Alberta exported a wide range of agricultural and food products to 135 countries around the world. For more information, contact Barbara Pekalski, statistics and production economics, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, (403)427-4011. A full summary and tables of the 1996 agri-food exports are available from Pekalski upon request.

Measure your environmental success

Agriculture industries are increasingly focusing on ways to improve environmental practices. The *Farm Environmental Risk Assessment Guide*, developed by Alberta Pool with support from industry stakeholders, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and PFRA, is a tool Alberta crop and livestock producers can use to measure their environmental performance. The guide also helps producers pin-point potential areas where practices could put them at risk under Alberta legislation. The voluntary, self-directed workbook and reference guide has six main sections: crop protection; equipment, energy and irrigation; livestock; natural habitat and biodiversity; oil and gas; and soil and water conservation. Copies are available from Alberta Pool's Calgary office or on the Internet. The cost is $20 per hard copy or $10 on the Alberta Pool Online website: **www.awp.com**

For more information, contact John Petruic, Alberta Pool (403)290-4669.

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AGC celebrates 25 years

For 25 years the Alberta Grain Commission (AGC) has reviewed and examined the grains and oilseeds industry, from storage, transportation and marketing to supply and price stabilization. Throughout that time, recommendations to the Alberta Minister of Agriculture on the grain industry have shown that the AGC is a positive part of industry development.

"The role of the AGC has expanded to be much broader than it originally was," says Ken Moholitny, AGC chairman. "Established in 1972, it was given the mandate to maximize the long-term interests of farmers, improve the grain industry's ability to access and respond to market opportunities at home and world-wide, and to look to diversification and add value to Alberta grain and oilseed crops. From its beginnings, the Commission has worked to ensure that policies meet the needs of farmers. Members are active in promoting a viable, market-driven agri-food sector in the province."

Improvements in technology have necessitated changes in the industry and the AGC have kept stride with those changes. One of the goals of the Commission, to improve Alberta's grain industry's ability to access and respond to changing domestic and world market opportunities, has seen commission members reviewing and making recommendations based on agricultural research and trend analysis.

"Alberta's agriculture industries are pursuing a collective goal of $10 billion in primary production and $20 billion in value-added," says Moholitny. "The grains, oilseeds and special crops industry holds one of the lead growth roles that will see the province reach that goal by the year 2005."

The Commission has, over the years, been actively involved in forums and partnerships with industry and government. One example is the recent Canada-U.S. grain industry meeting with representatives from Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER) in Seattle. This was an historic meeting at which producer organizations reached a consensus on recommendations regarding cross-border trade issues, domestic and export programs and impacts of state trading practices.

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"The Commission remains an active partner with industry in fostering growth and development of the grains industry," says Moholitny. "In recent years, it has become a full member of PNWER and the Canada Grains Council."

The AGC continues to serve the Minister, the industry and the producers of Alberta. To commemorate the 25th anniversary of the AGC, a booklet, Alberta Grain Commission - 25 Years of Service, has been produced. The summary provides a general perspective on the activities of the Commission over the years. It covers major items and provides an indication of the diversity of issues addressed by its members over the years. The booklet is available from the Commission, #306, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6.

Contact:	*Ken Moholitny*	*David Walker*
	(403)427-3078	*(403)427-3077*

Industrial milk production quota reduced

The Canadian Milk Supply Management Committee has reduced the national Market Share Quota (MSQ), effective August 1, 1997.

MSQ defines the size of the Canadian milk market for industrial dairy products such as cheese, yogurt, butter and ice cream. The MSQ was reduced from 43.9 million hectolitres annually to 42.6 million hectolitres to bring milk production in line with changing consumer demands as well as international trade obligations. Although quota is reduced, producers will be able to maintain full or expanded production that will be sold in the world marketplace.

"Canadian consumers are choosing different types of dairy products, eating less ice cream and more cheese, but also purchasing lower fat milk and dairy products," says Robert Krueger, the chairman of Alberta Milk Producers. "This means that less milk fat is needed to manufacture the types of dairy products Canadian consumers want."

Alberta's 1,100 dairy producers support Canada's international trade obligations. This is proven by the recent importation of 2,200 tonnes of butter into Canada. These imports displace domestic production but were negotiated as part of Canada's minimum access requirements.

"Dairy producers are committed to providing Canadian consumers with a continuous supply of fresh, high quality dairy products at reasonable prices," says Krueger. "Reducing MSQ also allows producers to maintain fair market returns for domestic milk production while seeking out new export opportunities."

"The orderly marketing system sets production quota to ensure there is adequate production to meet Canadian requirements," says Jim Heron, the Chairman of the Alberta Dairy Control Board. "These requirements are reviewed regularly by the Canadian Milk Supply Management Committee with representation from producers, processors and governments across Canada."

Contact:	*Lloyd Johnston*	*Cheryl Robb*
	(403) 361-1231	*(403) 453-5942*

Burning bluegrass

Within the next few days, Kentucky bluegrass seed producers will be burning their stubble. There are only a few thousand acres of bluegrass in Alberta and chances are most people won't even see the early to mid-August smoke from burning fields. However, bluegrass producers are implementing measure that ensure public safety.

"Fire is a normal management practice following harvest," says Mike Pearson, policy analyst with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "In Alberta, there haven't been any accidents associated with past bluegrass field burns. But, where there's fire, there's smoke and smoke crossing a highway is the primary public safety concern."

A group of seed producers and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD) have developed a handbook and a video to assist farmers with their field burning.

"The producers wanted to develop industry guidelines that would keep burning a responsible crop management tool," says Pearson. "Public safety is their number one goal. They also want to reduce the smoke nuisance. One of the policy guidelines imposes a no-nighttime burning policy because nighttime inversions cause smoke to hug the ground and make it very uncomfortable for nearby residents."

Ken Miller, a bluegrass seed producer at Milk River, was on the committee that developed a safe burning practices handbook. "The handbook tells farmers how to have a safe and successful burn. Special

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attention is given to notifying the municipality, fire department, neighbors and, where necessary, the highway and airport authority. The producers I have talked to are eager to comply with these conditions."

Miller's farm is featured in two videos *Grass Seed: a new irrigated crop* and *A Safe and Perfect Burn*, which demonstrates proper burning techniques. These videos are now available for sale or can be borrowed from AAFRD offices.

The safest weather conditions to burn also happen to be the best conditions to get a complete removal of crop aftermath.

"Burning removes stubble and crop aftermath that inhibits new tiller formation," adds Pearson. "If late summer sunlight and heat can't penetrate to ground level, yields can be reduced by up to 50 per cent in the following year."

"Besides opening up canopy, fire controls most Kentucky bluegrass pests. Fire reduces the need for most fungicides, insecticides and herbicides," says Henry Najda, research agronomist at the Brooks Crops Diversification Centre, AAFRD. "Since healthy roots remain in the soil and the crop quickly regrows, soil erosion isn't the same concern as it is with burning grain stubble."

Bluegrass helps build the soil and can be an important part of a crop rotation.

More information on the ***Kentucky Bluegrass Field Burner's Handbook*** can be found on the AAFRD Internet site at **http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/crops/forage/kbgras1.html**

Contact: Mike Pearson Ken Miller
(403)422-2331 (403)647-2127
Henry Najda (403)362-1346

FBMP accepting proposals anytime

In previous years, there was a once a year approval time for proposals submitted to the Canada-Alberta Farm Business Management Program (FBMP) but that has now changed.

"FBMP has made some significant changes to the way it approves proposals this year," says Craig Smith, program representative for the south/central regions of the province. "In listening to our project leaders and being responsive to their needs, we have adopted a process of approving proposals as they are submitted."

Previous project leaders have been sent the information on the new procedures. Any new project leaders are encouraged to contact Anita Lunden, provincial coordinator of the FBMP at the Farm Business Management branch in Olds at (403)556-4278, for more information.

A program calendar will be put together again this fall, advising of the farm management projects throughout the province. Project leaders are encouraged to get their ideas into a proposal and get it in as soon as possible to take advantage of the calendar promotion. Getting the proposal in by the third week of August would make it possible to get it into the Fall Program Guide in the event that the project was approved.

"The paperwork for projects, especially the smaller ones of $2,500 or less has been greatly simplified," adds Smith. "This is welcome news for all project leaders and will take a lot of the hassle out of using the funding of the FBMP."

For more information, contact a regional program representative: Peace region, Nan Bartlett (403)835-4288; northwest/northeast regions, Arla Trueblood (403)954-3745; south/central regions, Craig Smith (403)626-3448; or provincial coordinator, Anita Lunden.

Contact: Anita Lunden Craig Smith
(403)556-4278 (403)626-3448

Affordable WCB coverage for farms

Workers' compensation isn't compulsory for farmers in Alberta, but it is an option many farmers see value in, particularly those who have experienced injuries or who have employed workers that have been injured on the job.

"The cost of workers' compensation on farms used to be a big prohibitive factor, but that has now changed," says Solomon Kyeremanteng, manager of the farm safety program with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Compensation insurance now can cost as little as $2.75 per $100: $4.50/$100 less than the old premium of $7.25 per $100."

Many producers have checked into the premiums and found that WCB insurance coverage is a good value. Also, with WCB coverage you cannot be sued personally so business interests are protected.

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"Working around farm machinery and livestock can be dangerous," says Kyeremanteng. "The Alberta Farm Accident Monitoring System (FAMS) reports that more than four farm related injuries are treated in the 70 participating Alberta hospitals each day. That figure doesn't include injuries treated locally or in hospitals in major centers. No one thinks they'll get hurt on their farm, doing jobs they've done for years, but the statistics show otherwise. Despite increased emphasis on safety, injuries still happen and some are very serious."

Workers' compensation is a disability insurance system set up under the Alberta Workers' Compensation Act that protects both employers and workers against the impact of work related injuries. The system is entirely funded by employers. If you opt to purchase workers' compensation insurance, your injured workers will be compensated for lost income, health care and other costs related to their injury. Without workers' compensation coverage, farm workers could be faced with the cost of lost wages, permanent disabilities, fatalities and health care services, plus costs for replacement workers to continue operating the business.

Private insurance can provide similar coverage but the compensation provided by WCB goes one step further by including protection from workers taking legal action against the farm employer if injuries occur. No-fault guaranteed insurance ensures workers are eligible for benefits, regardless of whether their own negligence contributed to the accident, and it protects the employer from being sued. By sharing the costs of compensating injured workers with farmers throughout the province, affordable coverage is now available.

"As an employer, if injured on the job, personal coverage for the employer and spouse is necessary to be eligible for compensation benefits," adds Kyeremanteng. "It can be obtained in any amount between a minimum and a maximum set by WCB. It is important to base the amount of coverage purchased on insurable earnings reported to Revenue Canada because this amount will be used to determine the compensation you receive in the event of a work place injury. Personal coverage is automatically renewed every year unless it is changed or canceled by the individual or the WCB."

Premiums paid are based on the risks and accident experience in the industry and are adjusted for employers with better than average or poorer accident records. The WCB classifies businesses according to the industry in which it operates. Farmers who have similar operations and share similar risks are grouped together for premium rate setting purposes (i.e. grain farmers).

Preventing injuries is still the best way to protect workers and control workers' compensation costs. WCB coverage can be a worthwhile investment and provide the peace of mind that farm families and workers are protected. Information on current premium rates for the agricultural sector is available from WCB's Customer Service Unit at (403)427-1246.

Contact: Solomon Kyeremanteng
(403)427-4227

Dry July

After a wet June in most of Alberta, July turned out to be much drier.

"Good soil moisture reserves, combined with near average temperatures and heat units in July provided good growing conditions for most crops," says Peter Dzikowski, agri-weather resource specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Satellite imagery confirmed that crop and pasture conditions throughout Alberta were generally much better than normal, however additional precipitation is needed."

The overall provincial average rainfall was 31 per cent below normal and the provincial average temperature was very near normal for July in Alberta.

The provincial average July precipitation of 48.0 mm was 21.9 mm below the 1961 to 1990 July average of 69.9 mm. July is usually the wettest month of the year.

The Southern region was the driest, reporting an average of 10.8 mm, only 25 per cent of the normal monthly precipitation of 43.6 mm. The central, northeast and northwest regions were also dry, reporting about half to two thirds of normal July precipitation. The Peace region was exceptionally wet, reporting well above normal precipitation with amounts of 70 to 180 mm or 128 to 296 per cent of normal precipitation.

Amounts of two to 180 mm, or three to 296 per cent of normal were reported in Alberta. High Level recorded 180.4 mm of precipitation the greatest precipitation departure which was at 296 per cent of normal.

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The provincial average temperature was 0.1 degrees above the 1961 to 1990 average of 16.7° C. Temperatures were below normal in the south, near normal in the central region and above normal in the northeast, northwest and Peace regions. Milk River reported the greatest temperature departure, 2.3 degrees below the monthly average of 18.9 degrees for July. Alberta locations reported monthly average temperatures ranging from 1.3 degrees above normal to 2.3 degrees below normal.

These averages are based on data recorded at 59 Environment Canada climate stations across the province.

Contact: Peter Dzikowski
(403)427-3594

Master Gardener program

Graduating from the Master Gardener program at the Devonian Botanic Garden (DBG) results in a Master Gardener Certificate. This certification program is recognized in the horticulture industry and is a excellent tool for anyone interested in making horticulture or gardening enterprises their career.

"The Garden initiated the first Master Gardener program in 1994 and since that time, approximately 75 students have graduated from the program and are certified master gardeners," says Gordon Nielson, instructor at the DBG. "Trainees entering the program should have a high level of interest in gardening and they should be prepared for an intensive training program. The course is very challenging and will take a considerable amount of time over and above scheduled lectures."

Classes take place at the DBG and cover approximately 20 to 24 areas in horticulture. The areas covered include: annuals and biennials; perennials; herb gardening; plant identification; plant propagation; seeds and seed exchanges; working with seeds; garden pest control; soils, fertilizers and plant nutrition; indoor plants; lighting systems; wildflower gardening; alpine gardening; vegetable gardening; hobby greenhouse gardening; woody ornamentals; Japanese gardens; botanical keys; pruning; budding and grafting; landscape design; plant classification; history of gardens and gardeners; container gardening; botanical nomenclature; lawn care and maintenance; herbaria; and, plant physiology.

"Homework assignments and practical experience make up a big portion of the time commitment that students must complete," adds Nielson. "The homework will often necessitate students using the garden's library or garden grounds for research. Also, 80 hours of practicum must be carried on during the Garden's regular working hours. The practicum can be started immediately and must be complete by September, 1998."

The cost of the program is $239 (non-refundable) payable before the program starts. The fee includes all lectures, supplies used in the sessions and textual information, it does not include textbooks. In addition, a $125 refundable deposit is held on deposit by DBG until completion of the 80 hours of practicum.

Space is limited. The DBG encourages anyone interested in the program to apply early. For further information or to apply, contact the education branch of the DBG at (403)987-2064.

"Our students have enjoyed great success in finding employment in the horticulture field once they have completed the program," says Nielson.

The next program starts Wednesday, September 17, 1997 and runs from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. for 14 consecutive Wednesdays to December 17.

The Devonian Botanic Garden, an extension of the University of Alberta, is located 15 minutes southwest of Edmonton on Hwy 60.

Contact: Gordon Nielson
(403)987-2064

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Alberta Nurseries carries on the shelterbelt program

Ordering for the shelterbelt tree program continues as in the past, with both farmstead trees and conservation trees available. The shelterbelt program, privatized as of April 1, 1997, was a successful program and is operating under new management. Alberta Nurseries, in its first year of private operation, will deliver trees in May to more than 60 distribution points throughout Alberta. There are 25 varieties of 12 – 16 inch stock (generally two to three year-old trees) that can be ordered for farmstead shelterbelt use at a similar cost to previous years. There are 10 varieties of conservation trees provided by the PFRA, Indian Head, Saskatchewan through Alberta Nurseries at no charge other than the application fee. Since the trees are grown in advance and there is a limited number, the orders are delivered on a first-ordered – first-served basis. Orders for next spring delivery are being taken now and should be sent in as soon as possible. For more information or order forms, contact Rick Owen of Alberta Nurseries (403)224-3407. Order forms are also available at all district offices of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development or the local PFRA office.

Olds College and UGG partners in Swine Enterprise

Olds College has entered into a partnership with United Grain Growers (UGG) in the operation of its Swine Enterprise. The enterprise is a true-to-life practical component of the classroom studies. The college provides students with access to leading edge farming operations. By involving industry students will be exposed to producers, processors and marketers. They will also gain industry insights into technology and research and trends that have a direct affect on the industry. The UGG is operating the swine facility as a demonstration site under their subsidiary companies Unifeed and Unipork Genetics. Some of the commercial testing at the facility will include computer management programs capable of tracking genetic improvement along with access to special computerized training programs. The partnership allows for a generous practicum component for Olds College's Agricultural Production and Animal Health Technology students. For further information, contact Shelley Brolsma at Olds College, (403)556-4703.

AGRI-NEWS

August 25, 1997

CANADIANA

SEP 03 1997

El Nino could mean a mild winter

"A developing El Nino/southern oscillation (ENSO) event foreshadows the possibility of a mild winter with below normal precipitation in Alberta," says Peter Dzikowski, agri-weather resource specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Decisions made now, at harvest time, can influence soil moisture and dugout water levels next spring."

Managing stubble height at harvest is important for trapping snow that protects the soil and provides the source of water to fill dugouts in spring. For those who depend on spring runoff to fill dugouts, next spring could provide below normal runoff, if the ENSO develops as expected and there is below normal snowfall. The option exists to pump water this fall from available water sources to top up dugouts, as a precaution.

"Farmers should consider the effect of a milder winter with less snowfall as they evaluate options this harvest season and in the fall," says Dzikowski. "The prospect of a milder winter and less snow sounds appealing after the colder winters, ample snowfall and delayed springs Albertans have experienced the past couple of years. But producers should keep in mind that an earlier but drier spring is more likely following ENSO events. Good residue cover on fields can help preserve soil moisture and not delay seeding under these conditions."

ENSO is the acronym used to describe a feature of the equatorial Pacific, where El Nino refers to ocean temperatures off the coast of South America and the southern oscillation refers to the pressure pattern seen between Australia and Tahiti.

Drought during the growing season is an ongoing concern to Alberta producers. There is no consistent evidence to link ENSO with drought in Alberta.

For further information on crop harvest and water supply options, contact the nearest district Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development office. For information on current weather and forecast weather conditions, visit the weather and climate page on the Agriculture Internet site at **http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/climate/index.html**

Contact: Peter Dzikowski (403)427-3594

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

New value-added tech transfer program

The Alberta Agricultural Research Institute (AARI) launched a new program financed under the Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development Fund (CARDF). The program will financially support the transfer of new technology or innovative products from research laboratories to Alberta's value-added agri-food processing industry.

"The program will enable us to bridge the gap between those who create knowledge and technology and those who bring value-added innovation to market," says Dr. Yilma Teklemariam, research manager with AARI. "The prospects for expanding value-added processing of food and non-food agricultural products have never looked brighter. The results will be increased incomes, better job opportunities and a higher quality of life for Albertans."

CARDF is administered by the Agriculture and Food Council of Alberta. Projects approved for the program are funded on a 50/50 cost shared basis with industry partners. The maximum amount AARI will contribute to a project is $25,000.

This new initiative represents one part of AARI's broad efforts to contribute to the achievement of a $20 billion a year value-added processing industry in the province by the year 2005. Eligible proposals are those designed to:

- test new technology, innovative products or process improvements to speed up commercialization,
- demonstrate the practical application or commercial feasibility of proven new products, technology or packaging techniques,
- evaluate, modify or adapt technology, products, packaging or processing methods developed elsewhere to meet Alberta's needs.

"To be supported, the proposals should be well planned," says Teklemariam. "They should show clear potential to accelerate the transfer and commercialization of new value-added technologies, novel products or process improvements."

Eligible applicants are teams consisting of entrepreneurs who can commercialize new value-added products and researchers and specialists who develop innovative technologies or products. The approved projects can be carried out in private sector facilities, academic institutions or government technology centers. Preference will be given to proposals submitted by small and medium-sized enterprises.

Application forms are now available. Submissions will be accepted continuously throughout the year. For more information or application forms, call the AARI office at (403)427-1956 or Dr. Teklemariam at (403)422-6519.

Contact: Dr. Yilma Teklemariam
(403)422-6519

Conservation easements in Alberta

Conservation easements are voluntary agreements between landowners and organizations interested in protecting the natural value of land. They allow an on-going partnership between landowners and qualified organizations as opposed to outright purchase of a piece of land.

On September 1, 1996, the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Amendment Act was proclaimed. The amendments allow private landowners to enter into conservation easement agreements with qualified organizations such as a non-profit conservation group, having charitable status and organized to hold conservation easements, a local authority such as a municipality, and the provincial government.

"Conservation easements can be mutually beneficial arrangements for the parties involved without actual transfer of ownership," says Mike Pearson, with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The benefits of conservation easements include a potential income tax credit and the knowledge that the natural values of the land will be protected."

Like utility easements, conservation easements are attached to the land title. Because of this, landowners need to carefully consider the terms of the agreement.

"In many cases, conservation easements will be compatible with most long-term agricultural use of the land," says Pearson.

Conservation easements are used mostly for conserving natural areas or wildlife habitat. They cannot be used to protect agricultural land for agricultural use only.

"There are numerous tools that serve conservation and protect wildlife habitat, this is just one option that landowners can consider," adds Pearson. "Other tools include individual conservation or preservation efforts, voluntary agreements, leases or the sale of land to conservation groups."

Landowners must remember that easements are a partnership and the organization holding the easement can enforce the negotiated terms of the agreement. Conservation easement agreements can be for a specified period of time or can be designed to last forever. There are considerable legalities involved in registering an easement agreement. The agreement takes time to put together and isn't a simple matter. Conservation easements certainly have their place but they are not the answer for every situation.

The Environmental Law Centre has produced a guide, ***Conservation Easement Guide for Alberta***, that answers many of the questions landowners may have when considering entering into conservation easements. The publication is available for $14.95 plus GST from the Environmental Law

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Centre, #204, 10709 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton, AB T5J 3N3, or by calling (403)424-5099, or 1-800-661-4238 outside of the Edmonton area.

Contact: Mike Pearson
(403)422-2331

New chair elected to AESA Council

Alberta's Agriculture Minister has announced the election of Bruce Beattie as the chair of the Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture (AESA) Council.

"Mr. Beattie brings a wealth of experience to this council and environmentally sustainable programming in this province will benefit greatly from his practical knowledge of the industry," said Ed Stelmach.

Mr. Beattie, a farmer from Sundre, recently stepped down as chair of the Alberta Milk Producers after five years of service and now serves as the Alberta director to the Dairy Farmers of Canada. He was elected at the Council's inaugural meeting in Edmonton on August 6 and 7, 1997.

The 27-member AESA Council reflects a broad range of diverse interests in the industry, including the crop, livestock and processing sectors. The Council also includes representatives from environmental and wildlife organizations, the three levels of government and key industry organizations such as the Agriculture and Food Council and the Alberta Agricultural Research Institute.

"One of our first jobs will be to set priorities for the 1998 - 1999 fiscal year," said Beattie. "The council will be working hard to make sure dollars available for environmentally sustainable programming are used effectively and that funds will be allocated to those projects that best help producers and processors improve their environmental performance."

One of the council's goals will be to encourage the agri-food industry to find ways to protect the environment while remaining competitive in world markets. The Council is also responsible for providing direction to the Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture (AESA) program.

The AESA program began on April 1, 1997 with a budget of $5 million per year. Funding will be made available to agricultural and aboriginal organizations, processors, rural municipalities and environmental groups to deliver information and demonstrations on environmentally sustainable agriculture practices. Funds will also be available to monitor the impact of the agriculture industry on soil and water resources as well as environmentally sustainable agriculture research.

The AESA Council will be meeting on a regular basis to make sure that programming priorities are in tune with the changes that are happening in the industry. The Alberta agriculture industry has the potential to achieve $10 billion in primary production and $20 billion in value-added processing by 2005. Growth of this magnitude means it will become even more important than ever to make sure that every effort is made to protect the environment, whether it's the soil, water, air or native flora and fauna.

Contact: Ron Glen
(403) 427-2137
Carol Bettac
(403) 427-3885
Bruce Beattie
(403) 638-3735

AESA program funding

"Research is the key to sustainable growth in the agriculture and food processing industry", says Bruce Beattie, newly elected chair of the Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture (AESA) Council. "It is important that we make the most of the research dollars we have available for environmental sustainability research. For that reason the AESA Council has decided to pool the funds allotted for environmentally sustainable agriculture research with the Alberta Agriculture Research Institute (AARI) funds to get the biggest bang for our bucks. The AESA research program has $500,000 and the AARI has $600,000 available for resource conservation research, bringing the pooled funding to $1.1 million per year."

Beattie made his comments following the inaugural meeting of the AESA Council held August 6 and 7 in Edmonton. Beattie, past-chairman of the Alberta Milk Producers and a farmer from Sundre, was elected to chair the Council, which is composed of producer, agri-business, processor, government and environmental representatives.

"Research priorities include improved management of land, manure, agricultural and processing wastes, protection of water quality, integrated resource management systems and reducing the impact of new technologies on land, water, air, wildlife habitat and biodiversity," says Dr. Ralph Christian, executive director of the Alberta Agricultural Research Institute. "Without research in these areas, the industry will not be able to grow and sustain itself in an environmentally responsible manner."

The AESA Council will recommend two of its members for appointment to the AARI resource conservation research committee. The AESA Council will approve funding for AESA funded research projects based on recommendations from the AARI resource conservation research committee

The research program is one of four components of the AESA program. The other components include a farm based program that provides funds to agricultural service boards and

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agricultural organizations to promote the adoption of ESA practices on the farm; a processing based program to assist processors in adopting ESA practices; and, a resource monitoring program to monitor the effects of agriculture industries on soil and water quality.

The deadline for research proposals is November 1, 1997. Approved research projects will be funded effective April 1, 1998.

Contact: *Bruce Beattie* *(403)638-3735*
Carol Bettac *(403)427-3885*
Dr. Ralph Christian *(403)422-1072*

Harvesting the Internet

Over the past few months, several specialists and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development staff members from the south and central regions have worked with Jory Lamb of Canadian Rural Computer Services Inc. (CRCS) on a unique Internet training concept. Harvesting the Internet is a one-day, hands-on agricultural Internet course customized to suit the needs of individual agricultural associations and commodity groups.

"Harvesting the Internet will be offered province-wide this fall and winter," says Ted Darling, farm management specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "A pilot run of the project was successfully delivered to 19 farm audiences last winter in south-central Alberta. The Farm Business Management Initiatives program is funding a portion of the project."

Key contacts within agricultural groups and associations have been identified and will provide expertise in customizing the program, become involved in marketing the program and will provide some of the instruction. The program can deliver hands-on training anywhere in the province as long as there is a single dial-out phone line. The technology is cutting-edge and includes a satellite down-link for improved data transfer speeds and Pentium notebook computers with live Internet connections for up to 16 people.

"We have identified six different themes to address the requirements of various agricultural associations, interest groups and clubs," adds Darling. "They are: cow-calf; purebred cattle; pulse crops; commodity marketing; forages; and, cereals and oilseeds. These themes can be further refined as necessary. For example, the pulse program can easily be modified to suit any other special crop association."

"If your agricultural organization or commodity group would like more information on program dates and registration, contact Ted Darling at (403)948-8524.

Contact: *Ted Darling* *(403)948-8524*
Jory Lamb *(403)263-2727*

Quest for knowledge - 4-H PDP 1997

There was a quest for knowledge at the Alberta 4-H Centre in Westerose on August 10 to 15. Seventy-four enthusiastic 13 and 14 year old 4-H members participated in the annual summer 4-H program, **People Developing People**.

"Soon after arriving, delegates became explorers as they embarked upon a journey of personal growth and development," says Marguerite Stark, provincial 4-H programs specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. The delegates were involved in activities that challenged them to think critically and make positive choices.

Alberta Pool, Husky Oil and Lammle's Western Wear are significant supporters of this summer program which encourages self understanding. Their generous sponsorship allows 4-H members from across Alberta to recognize and extend their personal strengths and capabilities.

"***Read Between the Lines*** was this year's theme," says Marguerite Stark. "By reading wide and reading deep, the delegates learn to think open-mindedly, challenge new experiences and seek further knowledge before decisions are made."

4-H offers many annual programs and 4-H staff are already thinking ahead in preparation for **People Developing People 1998**.

Contact: *Marguerite Stark* *(403)948-8510*

Pesticide containers - Take 'em back clean

Take 'em back clean! That's the theme of this year's Crop Protection Institute of Canada (CPI) campaign reminding Alberta farmers and professional pesticide applicators to thoroughly rinse and safely dispose of their used pesticide containers.

"CPI's container management program encourages all pesticide users and dealers to take the time to do the right thing and triple 'pressure' rinse empty containers before disposing them at container sites," says Janet McLean, head of the pesticide management branch with Alberta Environmental Protection. "Triple rinsing ensures that all the product goes to where it belongs – protecting the crop. Also, clean and drained containers are safer to handle, cost less to process and dispose of, reduce container site liability concerns, and increase opportunities for container recycling."

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The combined support of farmers, professional pesticide applicators, dealers, contractors, provincial committees, governments and manufacturers, CPI's container management program is a Canadian success story.

"The program, funded by crop protection product manufacturers and operating in all provinces, led the world in 1995 with a recovery rate of 64 per cent of the pesticide containers supplied to the market place," says McLean. "Germany, at 41 per cent, ranked second and the U.S., at 28 per cent, ranked third."

In Alberta, the program collected over 989,000 pesticide containers from 99 municipally-operated container sites in 1996. Alberta led the nation in recovery rates with 75 per cent of the containers shipped into the province returned to pesticide container sites.

Last summer, CPI surveyed 457 farmers and 151 professional pesticide applicators, including 31 aerial applicators, in the prairie provinces to determine their pesticide container return and rinsing practices. The results showed that 99 per cent of custom applicators and 97 per cent of farmers said they were able to rinse the containers where they filled their sprayer. The survey also estimated that 85 per cent of the containers taken to container sites had been triple rinsed.

"Cleaned and drained containers can be deposited at one of the municipally operated container sites around the province," adds McLean.

Site locations are listed in the 1997 edition of the **Crop Protection with Chemicals** (*Blue Book*), or you can get location information from your local agricultural fieldman or the Action on Waste Recycle Information Line at 1-800-463-6362.

Contact: Janet McLean
(403)427-5855

Specialty livestock a hit at the Farm Management Congress

Delegates at the 11th International Farm Management Congress (July '97) took time out for a tour of Calgary-area specialty livestock farms and were impressed with their diversity and profitability.

"First on the tour was elk farm Rockyview Wapiti Farms," says Anita Lunden, Farm Business Management Program (FBMP) provincial coordinator with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "One of the main products is antler velvet used alone or mixed with ginseng as a holistic remedy to boost energy levels and cure a long list of ailments. The product is in demand, not only in Asia, but increasingly in North America and around the world. Elk is also raised for the selling of breeding stock."

Elk farming is not an easy business to enter. Breeding stock and special fencing and handling facilities are expensive.

On the other hand, Boer goats can be less costly at start up. It is estimated that enough purebred and commercial goats can be purchased for $15,000. In the first year a profit of approximately $5,000 can be turned.

Ray Hauck, owner of RAM H Breeders says, "Boer goats are gentle and perfect for family farming. Goat meat is popular in many parts of the world with interest growing in Canada. Two million pounds of goat meat was imported into Canada last year. We can't keep up with the demand."

Bison farming is also taking off in popularity. Delegates visited Buffalo Horn Ranch, operated by Peter and Judy Haase. Four years ago, a breeding bison was $1,800. That price has been escalating ever since and is now around $8,000 per animal.

"The Alberta Bison Association predicts herd numbers in the province will jump to 50,000 from the current 20,000 by the year 2005," says Lunden. "Bison is low in fat and is a very popular meat product in Europe."

Europe is also the major market for ostrich meat. A tour of Alberta Rose Ostriches Farm, owned by Cliff and Betty Mammel, let delegates see an operation of 80 juvenile birds and 35 chicks.

"In addition to meat, ostrich eggshells and feathers are used for jewelry, costuming and crafts," says Lunden. "Value-added products are growing in demand and alternative livestock producers are always on the look out for new and unique markets."

The demand for value-added agri-products has increased 137 per cent in the past 15 years on the world market. The big trend is in functional foods, those with multiple purposes, and nutraceuticals, which can enhance health and help reduce the risk of chronic disease.

"Alternative livestock businesses are not without their hurdles," adds Lunden. "In addition to high entry costs in some cases, appropriate processing plants are few and far between. People who enter the field must also be careful about consumer preferences."

Producers interested in examining alternative livestock as an expansion option are welcome to call Doug Bienert of the Alternative Livestock Product Team, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, (403)427-4616. Anyone interested in speakers or information on International Farm Management Congress, call Lunden (403)556-4278.

Contact: Anita Lunden
(403)556-4278

Agri-News Briefs

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Crop Duster approval

For crop dusting, the Government of Alberta's Pesticide Management Branch recommends hiring only aircraft approved by the Canadian Aerial Applicator's Association (CAP). CAP approval means the aircraft's spraying mechanism has been calibrated recently to help ensure pesticide applications cover target crops evenly and do not significantly affect untargetted areas. Aircraft meeting CAP standards display an approval sticker on their window. CAP clinics to calibrate and approve pesticide aircraft are held annually in Alberta. To be approved, aircraft are tested and must meet standards established by CAP and industry specialists. CAP testing includes checking pesticide flow rates through the aircraft spray mechanism, the overall consistency of the aircraft's spray pattern, the amount of pesticide outside the pattern area, and pesticide droplet size and pattern within the target area. Results determine necessary adjustments to the spray mechanism. Aircraft that have not undergone a CAP clinic within the last 20 months are not eligible for the Alberta Aerial Applicators Association's crop spray drift insurance program this year. The program covers drifting from pesticide spraying and is self-regulating. CAP concluded its 1997 Alberta clinics in May. Over 140 aircraft were checked at the CAP clinics across the prairies. For further information, contact Jock McIntosh, manager, pesticide management branch, Alberta Environmental Protection, (403)427-5855.

SIM Courses make it simple

Markets change constantly. Policies, contracts, prices, weather are just a few of the variables that have a direct effect on agricultural markets. To become a successful and profitable marketer, knowledge and experience are needed and that is just what the 1997 agricultural marketing courses provide. The hands-on SIM course series gives producers the tools needed to face the next century. Market specialists conduct these courses that designed for farmers, cattlemen and people in agri-business. Commodity futures, options, cash contracts, plus the strategies of when and where to use them are integral parts of each course. Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development offers SIM courses in an industry-friendly, three-day format each fall. Cost of each SIM workshop is $225 (includes GST). Be sure to register at least two weeks before the scheduled date. This year the courses will be held as follows:

FutureSIM	October 14 - 16	Convention Inn South, Edmonton
CattleSIM	October 20 - 22	Holiday Inn, Red Deer
GrainSIM	October 28 - 30	Port O'Call Inn, Calgary

For more information, contact Faye Douglas Phillips, home study program, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, 427-2171 in Edmonton. For toll-free access, outside of the Edmonton area, dial 310-0000 first.

AGRI-NEWS

September 1, 1997

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Biological weed control project approved

Large-scale biological weed control in land-locked farm ponds is one step closer to reality

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD) has given final approval to Lethbridge Community College and the Eastern Irrigation District (EID) for a joint Cooperative Aquaculture Research Project (CARP) to produce sterile, disease-free grass carp and distribute them for use in small contained bodies of water in Alberta

"I am confident that this project will result in new business opportunities for freshwater fish producers around the province and eventually across the country," said Ed Stelmach, Minister of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, while making the announcement

AAFRD's triploid (sterile) grass carp research project began in 1988. Its purpose was to develop a safe, effective and reliable biological alternative to mechanical and chemical weed control in irrigation canals and farm dugouts. More detailed study is required before full commercial-scale use of the grass carp in irrigation canals is possible. However, initial farm pond studies have shown encouraging results

Grass carp is a plant-eating fish that can consume large amounts of aquatic weeds daily when water temperatures are above 18 degrees Celsius. The fish are sterile because they are treated, so their chromosomes split into sets of three (triploid) rather than the normal two (diploid) The result is a fish normal in all other respects except that it cannot reproduce

Under the five year agreement, CARP will produce up to 160,000 triploid, sterile, grass carp each year. Lethbridge Community College would produce and raise the disease-free fish to the 10 centimetre size (four inches) at a new facility to be built at the south end of the campus. The EID will raise the fish to 25 centimetres (10 inches) in a newly-constructed facility on EID property in Brooks. The EID will be responsible for marketing and delivering the fish to AAFRD licensed ponds, including agricultural dugouts and golf courses

"The EID is pleased to be a partner in this initiative," said the chair of the EID, Pat Hemsing. "Our contribution of investing in this extended research project will show that commercial aquaculture has a future in irrigation operations. Providing grass carp as a tool to keep domestic ponds clear of aquatic weeds, without the need for chemical treatments, will improve the quality of rural water supplies."

Costs will be recovered by the sale of the fish to approved users. The funds earned by the project will assist new agriculture and environmental programs at LCC.

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Alberta

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AAFRD will regulate the production and marketing of the fish stocks. Alberta Environmental Protection (AEP) will issue research licenses to CARP in compliance with a national risk assessment protocol.

Construction of the new LCC Grass Carp facility and the EID facility at Brooks will begin almost immediately and is expected to be completed by January, 1998. AAFRD funded the initial stages of the CARP research and the joint venture partners will provide the new investment to take this program to the next level. Close to $1.5 million has been invested in the program since it began

"This project is a prime example of the cooperative effort between the agricultural industry, educational institutions and farmers that will help Alberta achieve its market potential of $10 billion in primary production, with another $20 billion in value-added processing by 2005," said Stelmach.

The Vice-President of Administration at Lethbridge Community College, Rick Buis, said that applied research will be an integral part of CARP and, as such, fits with the College's mandate of providing career training opportunities.

"The educational value of this project is immense," said Buis "Students will have the opportunity to work in the expanding field of aquaculture and fisheries management. The experience they will gain is invaluable."

For further information, a factsheet on grass carp is available from Agriculture district offices or the Publications Office, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development,
7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6

Contact: *Duncan Lloyd* *(403)381-5539*
Jim Webber *(403) 362-1400*
Rick Buis *(403) 320-3259*
Michael Evans *(403) 427-5594*

U.S. reviews the status of the NAFTA

The status of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) received mixed reactions in the U.S. as a result of recently released studies, reviews and testimonials.

The NAFTA, established on January 1, 1994, was designed to promote increased trade and investment among the three North American countries. Overall, NAFTA has had positive impacts on agricultural trade flows in North America. Statistics Canada estimates that agricultural trade among the three countries amounted to over C$30 billion in 1996.

After three years, NAFTA has been "a remarkable success," was the verdict from a June 26 conference on Free Trade organized by the U.S. Heritage foundation. Officials from all three countries praised NAFTA's successful effects on trade, employment and overall economic health and development Canada's David Plunkett hailed NAFTA's achievements, referring to Canada as a "very open, globally integrated economy."

A report released late last year by the North American Integration and Development Center suggests that significant parts of the Florida fruit and vegetable industry may be in serious trouble due to NAFTA. Last month, U.S. Congressman David Bonior endorsed this claim saying, "Since NAFTA was enacted, tomato imports from Mexico have doubled. Before NAFTA, there were 300 tomato farmers in Florida. Today there are fewer than 75." The report also finds that previous studies on NAFTA have significantly over-estimated job displacements due to imports from Mexico and, to a lesser extent, the number of jobs supported by exports

Earlier this year, in a hearing to review the status of the NAFTA, opinion was split on the positive impacts the Agreement has had on U.S. agriculture. A statement by a U.S. administrator for Foreign Agriculture Services (FAS) was very optimistic, calling NAFTA a major contributor to U.S. agriculture's world market success, while other groups such as the U.S. Canola Association took the opportunity to relay their disappointment with the Agreement, stressing the need for a "level playing field" for Canada-U.S. canola trade.

The Honourable Ed Stelmach, Minister, of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development praised Alberta farmers for taking advantage of opportunities opened up by free trade agreements. "Alberta farmers are definitely winners with NAFTA," says Stelmach. "Since the implementation of the NAFTA, Alberta's agricultural exports to the U.S. have increased by 62 per cent."

Overall, NAFTA has improved the general trading environment between the U.S., Mexico and Canada and opened up new or prospective markets in many sectors. In its 4th year of a fifteen-year life-span, there remains a substantial amount of time to continue to 'iron out' some of its wrinkles

Contact: *Kevin Dunlevy*
(403) 422-2263

Growing showy poinsettias

In order to provide showy looking poinsettias to brighten up the days of Christmas, Alberta greenhouses have already planted rooted cuttings. There are several different varieties that growers have learned to grow based on customer preferences, red colored varieties being the most commonly grown.

"Growing plants like poinsettias is a challenge because the plants must show good colour development by early December," says Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza, greenhouse crops specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. As a matter of fact people like to buy their

Cont'd on page 3

poinsettias in November and expect them to last after Christmas. They're no good if they flower after Christmas."

Growers must do a lot of things right and in a proper sequence to get those poinsettias in bloom at the right time.

"Poinsettias are short day plants," says Mirza. "They start turning colour once the daylight is less than 12 hours. During October, if a yard light is left on or the greenhouse is located near a highway and car headlights shine on the plants, the coloring process can be delayed."

Research done at the Crop Diversification Centre – North indicates that the use of additional copper can substantially increase the shelf life of poinsettias. This practice has been adapted by Alberta growers and that's why locally grown poinsettias last much longer than plants imported from other areas.

Contact: *Dr. M. Mirza*
(403)422-1789

4-H judging excellence rewarded

Seventy-three competitors participated in the 11th annual provincial 4-H judging competition. "The calibre of this competitive judging contest was very high," says Henry Wiegman, provincial 4-H agriculture specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The exclusive sponsorship of Alberta Treasury Branches and the fine hospitality of the Olds Agricultural Society resulted in a successful event."

"These young adult competitors demonstrate why Alberta Treasury Branches continues to be a proud sponsor of 4-H in Alberta", says Doug Appleyard, General Manager – Agri-foods, Alberta Treasury Branches.

Seventeen contestants earned the right to attend other shows and judging competitions co-sponsored by UNIBLOK Canada, Alberta Canada All Breeds Association (ACABA) and Alberta 4-H.

Heather Marcinkoski of the Wavy Lake Beef Club scored highest point total over the two-day competition. Marcinkoski claimed top spot as overall judge, was top in the placings competition, and placed fifth in the horse and sheep classes. She will be part of the Alberta team at the Denver Western 4-H Round Up in January 1998. They will compete against 4-H and Future Farmers of America (FFA) teams from across the US. Other team members include Bryce Sutter (second) of the Battle River 4-H Beef Club, Matthew Gosling (fifth) of the Bow Valley 4-H Beef Club, Barclay Smith (sixth) of the Meadowview Multi 4-H Club.

Richard Grant was the top reasons judge and placed third overall. His efforts earned him the right to attend the Denver Western 4-H National Stock Show also in January 1998.

Four other delegates will be travelling to Billings, Montana to compete in the Northern International Livestock Exhibition (NILE) in October. They are Vanessa Bel..r (fourth) of the Gibbons 4-H Light Horse Club, Candace Boyne (eighth) of the Wembley Wrangles 4-H Club, Eran Hawkwood (ninth) of the Jumping Pound 4-H Beef Club, and, Owen Nelson (10th) of the Roydale 4-H Beef Club.

The other eight provincial contestants qualified to attend the Canadian Western Agribition and compete in its international 4-H judging seminar. They are (in order of their finish) Kyley Johanson of Lakedell 4-H Beef Club, Diane Ringle of the DCC Ridgevalley 4-H Beef Club, Jane Caine of Calmar Heart of the Country, Shawna Griffin of the Gilby 4-H Light Horse Club, Sherry Ronsko of the Holden 4-H Beef Club, Bill Davis of the Wildrose 4-H Beef, Sarah Armstrong of Pembina West 4-H Beef Club, and, Marcus Borduzak of the Vimy 4-H Beef Club.

"The strength of the overall members' abilities can be seen in the fact that although two participants won species classes, they didn't make the top 17," says Wiegman. Those two were Trevor Hofsta of Rolly View Dairy, who won the Dairy competition and Chad Meunier of Meadowview Multi who was the top sheep judge.

Senior 4-Hers qualify for this provincial contest through district and regional events. The provincial competition includes instructional and information clinics. Participants go on to judge 15 livestock competition classes. They judge dairy cattle, beef cattle, light and heavy horses, swine and sheep conformation. Their evaluation includes written and oral reasons. They're also rated through a written quiz, microphone presentation and recall questions. This is the fourth year the provincial event was held in Olds in conjunction with the annual Mountain View County Fair.

For more information or complete contest results, contact Wiegman at (403)422- 4H4H. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Contact: *Henry Wiegman*
(403)422- 4H4H

Registered pesticide services are the best bet

When hiring a pesticide application service, the Government of Alberta's Pesticide Management Branch recommends employing a service registered with Alberta Environmental Protection (EP).

"Using registered services helps ensure pesticides are applied safely to property," says Jock McIntosh, manager, pesticide management branch, Alberta Environmental Protection. "It also minimizes the risk to your property and that of neighbours."

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Provincial regulations require that pesticide application services meet national standards and demonstrate an ability to handle and apply pesticides safely. EP registers pesticide services that have met these requirements

Registration ensures:

- pesticide services are inspected on a regular basis and comply with provincial regulations
- pesticide services can receive important information
- rapid complaint response
- enforcement action where necessary

Under EP regulations, a pesticide service must

- employ at least one certified pesticide applicator who has successfully completed an examination covering provincial legislation, health, safety and environmental considerations, technical knowledge, and equipment calibration
- ensure its non-certified employees are properly supervised when handling or applying pesticides
- keep application equipment in good working order
- maintain records of each pesticide application
- store pesticides in accordance with provincial regulations
- manage mix and loading sites to prevent environmental contamination
- maintain proper insurance coverage

"EP also expects registered services to meet standards developed by industry associations such as the Alberta Aerial Applicator Association and the Industrial Vegetation Management Association of Alberta," adds McIntosh

Contact: *Jock McIntosh*
(403)427-5855

Agri-News Briefs

Canadian Wheat Board names top export customers

In 1996-97, for the first time in history, Iran was CWB's largest export customer for milling wheat, taking the place of China. Iran was also the large export customer for durum, second only behind Algeria. In feed barley, Saudi Arabia was Canada's largest volume customer followed by Japan and Iran. The U.S. is the CWB's largest volume customer for malting barley. Total exports for wheat and barley for the 1996-97 crop year were 23 million tonnes compared to 19 million tonnes the year before Some factors that could have an effect on this years wheat prices and sales are

- world wheat production is currently forecast at 587 million tonnes, about four million tonnes higher than in 1996
- wheat production in China may reach 114 million tonnes, even higher than the record crop of 110 million tonnes in 1996-97
- CWB forecasts western Canadian wheat production at 21.6 million tonnes, down from 29.5 million tonnes last year
- world trade in wheat is expected to be 97 million tonnes, up slightly from 1996-97
- wheat carryover stocks at the end of the 1996-97 crop year are forecast at 120 million tonnes, up from 110 million tonnes in 1995-96

Coming agricultural events

Poultry Research Centre Open House
Edmonton Research Station
Edmonton, September 3
Dr. Frank Robinson (403)492-3234

Edmonton Kennel Club Dog Show
Sportex
Edmonton, September 5 - 7
Cathy Cinnamon (403)941-3922

Crop Protection Institute 45th Conference & Annual Meeting
The Lombard
Winnipeg, Manitoba, September 14 - 17
Contact – (416)622-9771, Etobicoke, ON,
e-mail: cpic@cropro.org, website: http://www.cropro.org

Richmond Fair
Ontario Fairgrounds
Richmond, Ontario, September 19 - 21
Dale Greene (613)838-3420, Richmond, Ontario,
e-mail: mardale@magi.com

Alberta's Extra Special Crops Seminar
Strathmore, September 20
Katie Benschop (403)431-1451 or
e-mail: blooming@superiway.net

Alberta Poultry Service Industry Workshop
Kananaskis Lodge
Kananaskis Country, Sept 29 - Oct 1
Narine Singh (403)427-5320

Alberta's Extra Special Crops Seminar
Pincher Creek, October 11
Katie Benschop (403)431-1451 or
e-mail: blooming@superiway.net

FutureSIM Workshop
Convention Inn South
Edmonton, October 14 - 16
Faye Douglas Phillips (403)427-2171 or
call toll-free 1-800-661-1122

Fall Renovation & Home Decorating Show
Exhibition Pavilion
Lethbridge, October 16 - 19
Barb Tate (403)328-4491; fax (403)320-8139;
e-mail: whoopup@agt.net

CattleSIM Workshop
Holiday Inn
Red Deer, October 20 - 22
Faye Douglas Phillips (403)427-2171 or
call toll-free 1-800-661-1122

Chinook Livestock Classic
Exhibition Pavilion
Lethbridge, October 24 - 25
Twyla Gurr (403)328-4491, fax (403)320-8139
e-mail: whoopup@agt.net

GrainSIM Workshop
Port O'Call Inn
Calgary, October 28 - 30
Faye Douglas Phillips (403)427-2171 or
call toll-free 1-800-661-1122

Alberta's Extra Special Crops Seminar
Consort, October 31
Katie Benschop (403)431-1451 or
e-mail: blooming@superiway.net

National 4-H Week
November 3 - 9, 1997

Seed Technology Workshop (CSGA)
Olds College
Olds, November 12 - 14
CSGA Alberta Branch General Manager,
Bill Witbeck (403)782-4641

Agri-Trade International Farm Equipment Expo
Westerner Park
Red Deer, November 12 - 15
Pat Kennedy (403)347-4491, Red Deer; Fax (403)343-6188

Agricultural Economic Development... Strategies and Programs to make it happen
Kinsmen Recreation Centre
Ponoka, November 14 - 15
Joyce Crandall (403)783-5777, Ponoka,
Charlie Cutforth (403)783-3333, Ponoka,
Dave Dmytryshyn (403)783-4431, Ponoka

Annual Meeting Potato Growers of Alberta
Capri Centre Hotel
Red Deer, November 19 - 21
Alan Stuart (403)291-2430, fax, (403)291-2641,
e-mail: pga@potatonet.com

1997 Alberta Sheep Symposium
Capri Centre Hotel
Red Deer, November 28 - 30
Mike Rieberger (403)224-3743, Bowden,
Cathy Gallivan (403)224-3962, Olds

continued on page 6

Country Christmas Craft Show
Exhibition Pavilion
Lethbridge, November 28 - 29
Barb Tate (403)328-4491, fax (403)320-8139,
e-mail: whoopup@agt.net

1998 Events

Alberta Horse Breeders and Owners Conference
Capri Centre
Red Deer, January 9 - 11
Les Burwash (403)948-8532;
e-mail: burwash@agric.gov.ab.ca

Banff Pork Seminar
Banff Centre
Banff, January 13 - 16
Aileen Reilly (403)469-4902, Edmonton,
e-mail: reilly@oanet.com

Seed Plant Convention
Westin Hotel
Edmonton, January 15 - 17
CSGA Alberta Branch General Manager,
Bill Witbeck (403)782-4641

Alberta 4-H Leaders' Conference
Red Deer Lodge
Red Deer, January 16 - 18
Penny Wilkes (403)427-4514;
e-mail: wilkes@agric.gov.ab.ca

Northwest Food Processors 8th Annual Convention & Exposition
Oregon Convention Centre
Portland, Oregon, U.S.A., January 18 - 21
David Pahl (503)639-7676, Portland, Oregon;
fax (503)639-7007; e-mail: nwfp@nwfpa.org

Precision Farming ... come put the pieces together!
Fantasyland Hotel
Edmonton, January 21 - 22
Dale Chrapko (403)853-8226, Vermilion;
fax (403)853-4776; e-mail: chrapko@agric.gov.ab.ca

Managing Agriculture for Profit 1998 MAP '98 Growing Alberta
Capri Centre
Red Deer, January 28 - 30
Curtis Weeks (403)578-3970, Coronation

National Agriculture Week
March 8 - 14

Northwest Food Service Show
Seattle Kingdome,
Seattle, Washington, U.S., March 21 - 23
Johanna Cramer (503)625-6256, Wilsonville, Oregon,
toll free 1-800-645-7350; fax (503)625-6938;
e-mail: foodshownw@aol.com

North American Conference on Pesticide Spray Drift Management
Holiday Inn by the Bay
Portland, Maine, March 29 - April 1
Tammy Gould (207)287-2731; fax (207)287-6558;
e-mail: **aftgoul@state.me.us** or
Tammy.Gould@state.me.us; or visit the homepage at
http://www.state.me.us agriculture bpcpage.htm

Whoop-Up Quarter Horse Circuit
Lethbridge & District Exhibition Pavilion
Lethbridge, April 17 - 19
Twyla Gurr (403)328-4491, fax (403)320-8139

Pacific Northwest Grain & Feed Association Annual Meeting & Conference
Sun Valley Resort
Sun Valley, Idaho, U.S., June 20 - 24
Johathan Schlueter (503)227-0234, Portland, Oregon;
fax (503)227-0059; e-mail: cwulff@transport.com

Alberta Branch CSGA Annual Meeting
Westin Hotel
Edmonton, June 28 - 30
CSGA Alberta Branch General Manager,
Bill Witbeck (403)782-4641

4th International Triticale Symposium
Red Deer Lodge
Red Deer, July 26 - 31
Don Salmon (403)782-4641; fax (403)782-5514, Lacombe
e-mail: **salmon@agric.gov.ab.ca**
or **don.salmon@agric.gov.ab.ca**

Ninth International Wheat Genetics Symposium
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, August 2 - 7
Pierre Hucl (306)966-8667, Saskatoon, SK,
Doug Knott (306)966-4953, Saskatoon, SK
Internet http www usask ca agriculture cropsci
winter_wheat 9th_iwgs

Editor's Notes:

1. Alberta communities host a number of local fairs. Because there are so many, they are not listed here. However, an annual list of agricultural society fairs is compiled by the agricultural education and community services branch. The booklet is available by writing Alberta Agriculture Publications Office, 7000-113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6. Please quote Agdex 007.
2. Alberta's agricultural colleges conduct a variety of short courses, workshops and seminars throughout the year. Please contact them directly for a list.
   - Fairview College at (403)835-6605 or e-mail: registrar@fairviewc.ab.ca
   - Lethbridge Community College at (403)320-3311
   - Olds College (403)556-8355; e-mail: for The Connection 73543.2137@compuserve.com
   - Lakeland College (403)853-8400, Vermilion

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Coming agricultural events notice

1. Do you know of any provincial (Alberta), national or international agricultural meetings, conferences or conventions coming in 1997, 1998 or 1999? Please state the name of the event(s):

2. When is the event being held?

3. Where is the event being held? Include city or town; hotel or convention centre, if known

4. Please give name, city or town, and phone number of a contact person for each event listed

5. This form has been completed by what organization? Please include your phone number

Please return this form by November 21, 1997 to:

Lee Anne Palutke, Agri-News Editor
Communications Division
J.G. O'Donoghue Building
7000 - 113 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T6H 5T6
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"Coming agricultural events" **is published quarterly in Agri-News.**
The next list will be December 1, 1997.

AGRI-NEWS

September 8, 1997

CANADIANA

SEP 8 1997

Grain drying

Grain drying has become more prevalent across the prairies and not only in wet harvest seasons. Increasingly, farmers are realizing the advantages of using grain dryers and are making them a regular part of grain harvesting systems

"Grain dryers give producers extra hours in mornings and evenings and extra days of harvesting," says Richard Guitard, cereals and oilseeds specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The advantages of a longer harvest season off-sets the equipment investment with the greater amount of grain that can be harvested. When a grain dryer is used, wheat, barley and oats can be threshed at 20 per cent moisture and then dried without loss of quality, grade or germination. That can mean a savings of four days or more."

The time saving during a wet harvest can be considerable. Early harvesting can mean the grain is harvested nearer the maximum dry moisture content, resulting in the highest weight of grain for sale as well as completing the fall work sooner.

A grain dryer makes it possible to straight combine crops, reducing shattering and possible spoilage or sprouting in the swath. Weather damage and wildlife losses can also be reduced by harvesting at the tough or damp stages.

"If not dried properly, stored grain can spoil. Moisture migration through the grain in the bin can lead to hot spots and insect contamination," says Guitard. "Grade and quality reductions and contaminates can turn top quality grain into compost. A loss of one grade can mean a significant loss in both price and weight."

Initial cost and labor involved in drying grain is often a deterrent to equipment purchase. The first deciding factor is the amount of grain being produced. Maximum benefit is realized when the storage and handling system is set up with the dryer as the central feature so that there is little or no movement of the dryer. The grain handling system should be set up so that grain can be moved from dryer to cooling bin or to storage without having to be trucked.

Temperature probes and moisture testers are important tools is using a grain dryer. They ensure that the grain is not damaged and that the correct moisture is obtained

Contact: *Richard Guitard*
(403)524-3301

This Week

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

What's that feed worth

The price of feed fluctuates as quality, quantity and overall feed demand change from year to year. This year, early indicators point to a fairly good supply of average to higher quality hay.

"As conditions of supply and demand change, so does price," says Brian Koberstein, beef specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Whatever price is set when a buyer and seller agree, the thing that is most important is the actual feed value of the hay, greenfeed or silage. Understanding the feed value is a critical first step in deciding what the feed is worth under supply and demand conditions."

When buying feed, one of the key things to examine is the feed quality of hay. Visual inspection is helpful but is of limited use when it comes to measuring protein and energy levels. Aside from palatability, or taste, the nutrient value is the most important factor.

"Palatability is often considered the number one factor in determining feed value," says Koberstein. "Feed isn't worth anything if the cattle won't eat it. The only way to determine palatability is to actually feed the product."

If acquiring a feed sample isn't possible, there are three characteristics that affect palatability on which decisions should be made. These measurable factors are nutrient content, moisture level and unit weight. Knowing these parameters is critical when determining feedstuff value.

"It's not uncommon to have protein content on an as fed basis vary from nine to 14 per cent on hay that visually appears similar," adds Koberstein. "A 1200 pound bale of hay at a consistent moisture content would contain 108 to 168 lbs of protein, respectively. If the cost per bale was thirty dollars, that results in a cost per pound of protein of 29 to 18 cents, a huge difference."

Being confident about nutrient levels, moisture content and unit weight will help producers arrive at a fair price for feed.

Content: Brian Koberstein
(403)361-1240

Agrium and 4-H – a strong partnership

The 4-H Foundation of Alberta is pleased to announce that Agrium recently donated $2,000 to enhance its support to Alberta's 4-H program.

"Agrium is pleased to have the opportunity to support the 4-H Foundation of Alberta as it is a perfect fit with Agrium's rural-based business," notes Cindy Andrews, public relations advisor for Agrium.

4-H is a youth program committed to developing leadership skills, public speaking, self confidence and community involvement. These ingredients are mixed with good times, fun and friendship to help young people develop memories and skills which last a lifetime. The program continues to be popular today with more than 8,700 members and 2,800 volunteer leaders across the province.

The 4-H Foundation of Alberta is the financial arm of 4-H. It was established in 1977 with the goal of developing a permanent camping facility which 4-H members could call home. Land was purchased from Dr. Grant MacEwan – 143 acres of scenic lakeshore property on Battle Lake – to initiate the dream. The Alberta 4-H Centre grew from these meager beginnings and now boasts a main lodge, dormitory, environmental centre, office/residence complex, beach area and more than 7 km of trails. Today, a broad mandate requires the foundation to operate and manage the Centre, be actively involved in future development of the facility, provide and administer scholarships for 4-H members and ensure a stable financial environment for the future of 4-H.

The foundation works closely with its joint partners, the Alberta 4-H Council and the 4-H Branch of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, to provide opportunities, friends and memories to countless rural youth. It is the generous support of sponsors like Agrium that helps the continued development of the 4-H program, one of the best youth programs in the world.

Today's young people will be tomorrow's leaders. With the support of sponsors like Agrium, 4-H looks forward to building that future with our province's greatest resource – its youth.

For more information on Alberta's 4-H program, contact the provincial 4-H office in Edmonton at 422-4H4H.

Contact: Vicki Berger
(403)427-2541

Heifer selection and management

Replacement heifers represent a significant investment in the future. The goal is to select heifers that will become productive cows and manage them so that they stay in the herd for a long period of time, allowing the recoup of investment and also make a profit.

"Traditional heifer selection usually means picking the big ones," says Patrick Ramsey, beef specialist - cow/calf with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "While this is simplistic, it isn't necessarily all bad. Picking big heifers usually means selecting daughters of early calving and heavier milking dams. Bigger heifers at weaning are generally older and are presumably healthier, so sound constitution is part of this selection method. These heifers cycle and breed early in the breeding season and tend to follow this pattern throughout their life."

Cont'd on page 3

There are some problems with traditional heifer selection, however. One of the biggest problems is frame creep. By selecting for larger weaning weights, a gradual increase in cow size results over time. Some of the heavier heifers may be over fat which impairs their milking ability as cows. As heifers go through puberty, cells in the udder differentiate between milk secreting cells or fat cells. If the heifer is on too high an energy ration at this time, more cells in the udder become fat cells and less become milk secreting cells

Some big heifers may have an endocrine imbalance and be more masculine and therefore less fertile. The main problem with tradition heifer selection is that it doesn't focus on the really important traits – maternal traits.

"Maternal traits include: fertility, early puberty, calving ease, milk production, soundness – which adds to longevity, temperament and low maintenance requirements," says Ramsey.

"Fertility comes first in beef operations, since if you don't get a calf there is no income. Nothing has as much economic impact on a beef herd as reproduction. Reproductive traits are five times more important economically than growth rate and 10 times more important than carcass quality."

Pregnancy rate in yearling heifers is largely genetics, whereas in two-year olds its management and nutrition. Selecting for fertility and early puberty, using a 45 day breeding season and ruthless culling of open yearlings, results in a more fertile cowherd. Select heifers from the most fertile cows that consistently calve early in the calving season. Early calvers wean heavier calves and more calves in their lifetime.

"Bull selection is very important," says Ramsey. "Use early maturing bulls with large scrotal circumference. These bulls are more fertile and pass this higher fertility and earlier puberty on to their daughters."

It's important that heifers reach puberty early. Reaching puberty early means they can cycle two to three times prior to breeding at 14 months of age. Non-puberal estrus occurs in some heifers. This means they show every outward sign of being in heat, including standing to be mounted, however, they don't ovulate and have no chance of getting pregnant. Montana research indicated that up to 35 per cent of the replacement herd showed non-puberal estrus in a given year. Early puberty is highly heritable. Other research has shown that conception rates can be 21 per cent higher when heifers were bred at the third estrus rather than at puberty. The presence of a sterile teaser bull encourages heifers to start cycling sooner.

"Nutrition affects beef breeding success more than any other single component," adds Ramsey. "It is the cornerstone of reproduction. Heifers should reach a target weight of 65 to 70 per cent of average cow weight by breeding time and 85 per cent of average cow weight by calving time. In order to accomplish this it's necessary to feed and manage bred heifers and second calvers as a separate group through calving and rebreeding. These youngsters are still growing and require a more nutrient dense diet. They're more timid and can't physically compete with mature cows. Adjusting rations when required can only be done if the heifers are monitored for condition score. Bred heifers should calve in a condition score of six (on a 1 to 9 scale). Inadequate nutrition decreases calving percentage three ways: fewer heifers reach puberty in time to breed; lower conception rate, and, greater embryo death rate. Feed testing and ration balancing will help prevent over or under feeding

There are other factors that have a direct bearing on cowherd health and production. Calving ease is important since heifers that experience difficult calving have a hard time rebreeding. Milking ability will increase weaning weight faster than any other trait. Although limited by genetics and feed resources, generally more fertile cows produce more milk. Soundness traits such as feet, legs, udders and eyes are highly heritable. These traits relate to longevity and productivity and combined with temperament and mothering ability contribute to convenience with lower labor and related costs. Low maintenance cattle require less feed to maintain themselves, produce a calf and rebreed. With feed being one of the biggest expenses in a beef operation, low maintenance – easier keepers is a real benefit.

"There are many benefits for producers when they select for maternal traits," summarizes Ramsey. "Select heifers of moderate frame and condition from early calving cows. Sell all heifers from a terminal cross breeding program."

Contact: *Patrick Ramsey*
(403)652-8303

Growing winter wheat in Alberta

Winter wheat is an excellent crop for many southern Alberta farmers to consider growing. Production potential is also very good for many areas in central Alberta. Winter wheat yields potential can be up top 20 per cent higher than for spring wheat, making it an economically attractive crop. Seeded in the fall and harvested earlier than spring wheat means winter wheat in the crop rotation spreads out the work load and that's good time management.

"Growing winter wheat is fairly straight forward," says Ross McKenzie, research scientist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "However, management practices are quite different than for most other crops. To successfully grow winter wheat, a number of specific management practices need to be followed."

Select the best variety. In southern Alberta, AC Readymade is newest and probably the best for most farmers to grow. In central Alberta, Kestral is the best variety due to its winter hardiness. Four new varieties have been licensed, however, seed is still in the multiplication stages and are not yet available.

Cont'd on page 4

Seed correctly. Ideally, winter wheat should be directly seeded into standing stubble. Seeding into canola or pea stubble offers crop rotation advantages such as reduced weed problems, volunteer weeds are easy to control, and reduced insect and disease problems. Standing stubble will help trap snow, which acts as an insulator. Four inches of snow will normally provide sufficient insulation to ensure over winter survival.

"It is best to seed in the first two weeks of September," says McKenzie. "This allows sufficient time for plants to germinate, develop at least three leaves and develop a crown at thebase of the shoot where the secondary roots develop. Later seeding may result in poorly established plants, resulting in lower winter survival. Late seeding may also result in delayed heading, later maturity, increased weed problems and lower yield potential."

The ideal seeding rate for winter wheat is higher than that used for spring wheat. Seed at a minimum rate of 120 pounds per acre. Winter wheat has considerable ability to tiller, however, best yields are obtained with higher seeding rate. Narrower row spacing of seven to nine inches is ideal.

Winter wheat has a very short coleoptile, which is the extension of the seed embryo that pushes its way through the soil to the surface where the first leaf develops. It's very important to seed winter wheat 0.5 to one inch deep. Seeding deeper will result in reduced emergence. Plants that do emerge are weaker, spindly and more susceptible to winter kill. A common mistake made by new growers is seeding winter wheat too deep.

"Soil moisture is often low in early September," says McKenzie. "The decision is whether to seed into dry soil or wait for rain. Saskatchewan research has shown that winter wheat will germinate at very low soil moisture levels. It is better to seed early in September than to wait for rain, provided that the seeding operation leaves the seed firmly covered with no more than one inch of soil."

Soil temperature can dramatically affect germination time. Winter wheat will take only five to seven days to emerge at a soil temperature of 20 degrees Celsius, but takes 12 to 30 days to emerge at soil temperatures of 10° to 5°C respectively.

Seed only into 'clean fields'. Volunteer grain can harbor an insect called the leaf curl mite, that can transmit a virus called wheat streak mosaic. Any actively growing green vegetation, such as grain or grasses, can serve as a host for the mites. If the mites move from the host plants into the winter wheat after emergence, the virus spreads and damage can range from sever to complete crop failure. Cultural controls are the only way to control this disease.

Pay attention to fertilizer needs and application. Alberta research shows that phosphate placed with or near the seed at the time of seeding improves plant growth in the fall and will increase winter hardiness. Approximately 20 to 25 pounds per acre of phosphate is usually adequate and is most effective when placed with the seed.

"Stubble fields are often low in soil nitrogen," adds McKenzie "Research in southern Alberta over the past four years clearly shows that fall applied nitrogen fertilizer has not reduced over-winter hardiness. It did show that nitrogen fertilizer banded before seeding at times dried out the seedbed and resulted in a rougher and lumpier seedbed and this can have an effect on germination and emergence. Also, seed-placed nitrogen fertilizer applied at rates greater than 50 pounds N per acre using urea at a seedbed utilization of 10 per cent with low soil moisture, had a detrimental effect on winter wheat germination and emergence."

It is recommended that fields be soil sampled and tested to determine optimum nitrogen fertilizer requirements. If testing isn't possible or conditions are very dry, apply only 50 to 75 per cent of estimated nitrogen requirements at time of seeding, soil test late in the fall and broadcast additional needed nitrogen in early spring depending on soil moisture conditions and soil test nitrogen levels.

Control weeds as needed. Winter wheat grows vigorously and often weed pressure is lower than with other crops. Winter annuals are the greatest problem. These can easily be controlled with inexpensive products such as 2,4-D or MCPA, preferable in late fall. Early spring application can also be quite effective.

Winter wheat can be an excellent crop to include in a crop rotation," says McKenzie. "By following simple, straight forward management practices and it can be an easy and profitable crop to grow."

Contact: Ross McKenzie
(403)381-5842

'Cows and Fish' goes emerald

Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Partnership, otherwise know as the Cows and Fish program, is a partnership among the Alberta Cattle Commission, Trout Unlimited, Fish and Wildlife Services, Public Land Services of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, the Canadian Cattleman's Association and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. Two of the managers of the program, established to bring these groups together and work toward healthier, sustainable riparian habitat, were recently awarded a 1997 Emerald Award.

"Riparian areas, the green area along streams and rivers and around wetlands and lakes, are a small yet critical part of our environment," says Barry Adams, southern range manager with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Riparian areas make up less than two per cent of Alberta's landscape but are some of the most extensively used areas in the province."

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About 80 per cent of fish and wildlife species depend on riparian areas. Recreationists use them for many recreational pursuits. In some areas of the province, they surround cattle watering areas. Healthy, green riparian areas became a concern as user intensity increased.

"Barry Adams, with Alberta Agriculture, and Lorne Fitch, wildlife biologist with Alberta Environmental Protection, have been instrumental in getting support for and participation in the Cows and Fish project," says Peggy Strankman, Canadian Cattlemen's Association. "They are quite a team. The strength of Cows and Fish project centers on their energy, expertise and commitment to a cooperative grassroots approach. The cattle industry is benefitting greatly from this project and wanted to recognize their commitment by nominating Barry and Lorne for a 1997 Emerald Award."

Being nominated was a complement – making it as one of the finalists in the corporate or institutional leadership categories was great – being chosen as the 1997 Emerald Award recipient was a tremendous acknowledgment of the hard work involved and excellent results of this project that started in April, 1993.

"We began with an evaluation of several southern Alberta watersheds," says Adams. "Landowners were very cooperative and the volunteer participation in the project was very encouraging. Once the project started, basic riparian habitat management techniques were presented to the broadest possible group of stakeholders. They were asked what they saw as problem areas and what tools they felt could be used or were needed to address those problems. It all comes down to cooperation and working toward a common goal."

The project consists of workshops, information publications, and demonstration sites. Adams and Fitch have personally presented 'Cows and Fish' to over 45 organizations in the past years and have reached an estimated 5,000 interested stakeholders and hosted demonstration tours for over 1,700 people including cattle producers, conservation groups, government land managers from several provinces and provincial agricultural ministers

"One of the most rewarding outcomes of this on-going project is the changes in attitudes as the many groups involved realize that they all want the same thing," adds Adams. "Both cattle producers and environmentalist/conservationist groups are recognizing that there are opportunities to work together and learn from each other's experience and expertise."

1997 marks the beginning of the watershed approach. This means working at the community level within a watershed, in this case, the M.D. of Ranchlands. A community workshop is being held on October 8 to discuss the needs and target outcomes with community members. A map of problem areas and a management and riparian area rehabilitation plan are key tasks that will be worked on.

Contact:	*Barry Adams*	*Peggy Strankman*
	(403)381-5486	*(403)275-8558*

Agri-News Briefs

AVEC funding available

Financial assistance is available to provide shared funding for projects dealing with engineering related needs of the agricultural processing industry. The funding is available through the **Agricultural Value-Added Engineering Centre** (AVEC). Priority will be given to projects designed to provide engineering support for the industry to acquire basic knowledge and skills for processing development; to solve critical, industry-wide problems; or to foster the adoption of key technologies. Assistance is available to individuals, organizations or companies requiring engineering support for the development of agri-food processing industries. Project support will be on a cost-shared basis to a maximum of $20,000. Proposals are to be submitted to AVEC, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development #201, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. For further information and program guidelines, contact Marshall Eliason (403)427-8764. Dial 310-0000 first, for toll-free access outside of the Edmonton area.

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AGRI-NEWS

September 15, 1997

Fall yard care

The sound of the geese and the change in the leaf color are a sure sign that fall is here again. Spending time in yard now will pay off next year

"Once frost has killed the annuals in the flower beds, they can be pulled," says Shelley Barkley, with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Leaving some plants, such as alyssum, protects fallen seeds that will provide color next year."

The vegetable garden can also be cleaned up. The material from both the flower beds and the garden can be composted, as long as it is disease free. Come late fall, give the annual flower beds and the garden a good turning over by digging a full spade depth of soil and leave the lumps. The frost action will break down the lumps over the winter, exposing some of the overwintering insects to the elements and improving soil texture. Fall is also a good time to add organic matter, animal or mushroom manure or peat moss. This organic matter will sit over the winter and get worked into the soil during the spring soil preparation.

"In the perennial border, the tops of most of the perennials can be cut off or left standing with the exception of peonies, iris and lilies where the tops have to be cut back," says Barkley. "Removing the tops helps to prevent overwintering of disease and insects. Leaving this material can help hold a snow cover during the winter as well as being attractive. Newly planted perennials will benefit from a mulch of clean material such as straw or a mixture of dry grass and leaves. Stake to mark the plants that need to be moved and divided early in the spring."

The strawberry patch should be mulched when the temperature drops to -7°C and stays there for three or four nights. Water the plants well, then mulch with oat straw or grass and leaf mixture. Watering lightly after applying the mulch will help hold it in place. A mulch layer of five centimeters deep after settling will keep the plants safe. Watch for signs of mice during the winter and treat as necessary.

"The wintering of tea roses begins in the summer," adds Barkley. "Stop fertilizing the plants at the end of July and in August, cut roses with shorter stems. Cut back the water in September but never let the plants dry out. After several hard frosts, the winter insulation should be put in place. Water plants well, head the canes back to 20 - 25 centimeters and put about 30 centimeters of insulating material, such as peatmoss, compost or soil around the canes and the crown. Don't pact the material too tightly."

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
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Cutting back the water to woody plants and perennials in August will aid the plants in preparing for winter. It's important to have a reserve of moisture in the root zone for all the remaining plants in the yard to prevent root damage during winter. Fill the soil profile with water in mid-October or just before the ground freezes.

"Early fall is a good time for weed control in the lawn," says Barkley. "Broad leaf herbicides for lawns applied on a warm day will control dandelions, chickweed and clover. Keep mowing the lawn as long as it continues to grow. To prevent damage to the crown of the grass, cut the lawn to no shorter than five centimeters."

Raking the leaves tidies the yard and removes overwintering sites for many insects and disease. The dried leaves can be stockpiled for next year's compost pile.

Since winter can fade the memories of summer, make a few notes for next year – what worked, what didn't and what to try for next year.

Contact: Shelley Barkley at (403)362-1300

UFA committed to Ag in the Classroom

Based on the successful history of Ag in the Classroom, UFA has reaffirmed their commitment to education by renewing their support for the program. UFA has invested $20,000 in the program for 1998.

"This renewal demonstrates the long-term commitment by UFA coupled with their commitment to positive change," says Betty Gabert, Ag in the Classroom program head with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "UFA is an ideal partner for the continued development of the program. Without industry partners, Ag in the Classroom wouldn't be the world class program it is."

Formal professional development coordinated by Ag in the Classroom is now entering its eighth year. The support given by UFA makes it possible to attract additional industry participation. Over $100,000 in value by industry and government sponsors is dedicated to the program each year

One of the challenges the program has faced is the need to keep current with the needs of teachers. Ag in the Classroom professional development program has changed considerably throughout the years to accommodate its changing audience. What was once a two-week program timed to correspond with summer vacation, is now an intense three part agenda scheduled to start in early March.

We are attracting a considerable number of new teachers, those just beginning their teaching career. Many of the attendees are from urban areas and this is often their first agricultural experience. The program is doing a lot to improve attitudes toward agriculture.

"There are many opportunities to insert rural, farm and agricultural aspects into existing study requirements and support the curriculum in an agriculturally positive way," says Gabert. "The program helps teachers bring education into the community realm. Teachers and students are looking for outside support to make education more relevant to real life and adding a dash of agriculture is a great way to bring education and the community together. More and more, teachers are looking to the source of information rather than sticking to only what is in a textbook. Education is taking some interesting new directions and this program fits right in."

The agenda for Ag in the Classroom '98 is being finalized. Part one will be held at the University of Alberta in early March. Further information is available by contacting Betty Gabert at (403)427-4225.

Contact: Betty Gabert (403)427-4225
Jim Watt, UFA-Coop (403)258-4508

Watch what you breathe

Farmer's lung can result in permanent lung damage. It is an acute condition caused by breathing moldy substances from hay or grain and results in lung inflammation, shortness of breath and fever.

Moldy organic dust may result from silage, hay, straw and grain stored under damp conditions. High exposure incidents include: breaking open moldy bales inside a barn, uncapping a silo or cleaning out a grain bin.

"Shortness of breath, fever, cough, muscle pain and discomfort that occurs between four and 12 hours after being exposed to the dust are all symptoms of acute farmer's lung," says Eric Jones, farm safety specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "In the early stages, exposure to moldy dust stimulates an allergy. Continued exposure is what triggers a more severe allergic reaction and kicks the body's immune system into high gear. Once a person has farmer's lung, it takes smaller and smaller amounts of dust to cause a reaction."

What makes farmer's lung dangerous is the fibrosis, or scar tissue, that forms during the allergy attacks. Acute cases can be treated with bed rest and oxygen therapy. Chronic cases can require medication.

"There is no cure for farmer's lung and once damaged the lung cannot be repaired," says Jones. "Early detection and preventative measures are the only answers. Prevention means to avoid all contact with moldy crop materials."

To protect yourself from farmer's lung you must:

- prevent exposure: measure dry feeds before storage, stay out of newly filled silos;
- prevent dust or chemical particles from becoming airborne – add fat to feed, wet down feeds before uncapping silos;

- use a respiratory device such as a filter mask or respirator when breathing in harmful, dust-laden air cannot be avoided

"Many types of masks are available ranging from $10 to $300," adds Jones. "Simple double-strapped particle masks are very inexpensive and do provide some protection. If a farmer is exposed to crop dust or moldy organic dust frequently, a higher quality respiratory device would be a very beneficial purchase to make."

Contact: Eric Jones
(403)427-4231

Conservation – 4-H members make the connection

The opportunity to learn about conservation motivated 4-H members from across the province to unite at the Alberta 4-H Center near Westerose on August 17 to 22, 1997. Fifty-eight delegates explored, learned about and interacted with the environment at the 32nd annual **Provincial 4-H Conservation Camp**.

The week long camp boasts a unique combination of education and entertainment. 4-H members learn about how five resource areas – Fish & Wildlife, Range Management, Soils, Water and Forestry – are interconnected and constantly affect one another. While making this connection, campers participate in talent shows, dances, sports events, obstacle races and hikes.

"The 4-H members benefit from an outdoor classroom where they can personally explore what they are hearing about," explains Carol Sullivan, camp director. "Added to this experience is the realization that they can take action and make a difference in their communities. We were fortunate to have an member of the Labo Exchange program participate in this year's camp. Aya Ogawa will travel back to Japan with a message about conservation for her community."

The week long camp was sponsored by **Alberta Power Limited** and **Shell Canada Limited**. Local 4-H members gained a great deal of knowledge about environmental issues as a result of this generous support.

While most 4-H members have the opportunity to attend Conservation Camp only once, two campers are chosen each year to return. Vanessa Belair and Kevin Borduzak were named the top campers for 1997 based on leadership abilities, communication skills and genuine concern for the conservation of our environment. They will return as junior staff for Conservation Camp 1998.

The resource staff are invaluable to the program. Daryl Cole of Alberta Environmental Protection and Martin Robillard of the Grizzly Wildlife Consulting Company shared their information concerning Fish & Wildlife. Cathie Erichsen-Arychuk, Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development (AAFRD), Hanna taught the 4-H'ers about Range Management while Tara Donald, AAFRD - Barrhead focused on Soils. Sandra Cooke and Gerry Haekel, AAFRD, Edmonton enlightened campers about water conservation. The fifth conservation area, Forestry, was sponsored by Weyerhaeuser Canada and taught by Christine Cripps-Woods of Winfield.

Participants also learned about giving presentations from Alberta Power Limited representative, Joey Gillis of Edmonton. Shell Canada representative, Alice Murray of Caroline, taught the group how to write press releases and work with the media.

The ideas and connections formed at this camp do not end on the last day. Howard Samoil, staff counsel with the Environmental Law Centre, Edmonton spoke to participants about community monitoring of the environment. Delegates were encouraged to spread the conservation message after they return to their communities. While strengthening their own environmental awareness, the 4-H'ers empower others to practice conservation methods in everyday life. The 4-H member who effectively reaches the most people is honored with the Grant MacEwan Conservation Award. The 1997 recipient of this award is Jessica Belair, a Gibbons 4-H Light Horse Club member from Fort Saskatchewan. Conservation Camp participants have until April 15, 1998 to submit their applications for the Grant MacEwan Conservation Award to the 4-H Branch office in Edmonton.

Contact: Carol Sullivan
(403) 422-4H4H

80/20 4-H Rally

On August 23 - 24, 1997 at the Alberta 4-H Centre, Battle Lake, more than 300 enthusiastic 4-H members, past and present, gathered to celebrate the 80th anniversary of 4-H in Alberta and the 20th year of the Alberta 4-H Centre.

"Guests were met at the gate by 4-H mascot 'Cleaver' the Beaver and many 4-H ambassadors," says Linda Rasmuson, chairman 80/20 committee. "The festivities started off with the launch of the new 4-H cookbook. Focus on 4-H Favorites Cookbook chairman Diane Maull and editor Elaine Almberg unveiled the two-volume set."

The set of 4-H cookbooks includes 1836 recipes, sells for $26 and is available from the 4-H Foundation of Alberta, RR 1, Westerose, AB T0C 2V0.

Gordon Sherwood, chairman Alberta 4-H Foundation, and Marguerite Stark, provincial 4-H programs specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, opened both the Westerose dorm shower and the conference room addition.

"Children enjoyed the games and activities planned by the 4-H alumni members," says Rasmuson. "There were tug-of-wars, face painting, bead works, relay races, water balloons and much more. Adults reminisced about 4-H when they were kids as they viewed an array of historic pictures."

Kristi Stelter, 1997 4-H Premier's Award Winner, and Alan Shenfield, 80/20 committee member, were MCs for the official welcoming. Greetings were brought from Mahlon Weir, 4-H branch head; Bob Boulton, Canadian 4-H Council president; Marie Logan, Alberta 4-H Council president; Gordon Sherwood, 4-H Foundation of Alberta chairman; and, Nancy Watson, Wetaskiwin County Councillor – Division 6.

Allan Shenfield read greetings from Dr. Grant MacEwan, former owner of the land now home to the Centre. Dr. MacEwan said, "I hope, from my tired old heart, that Battle Lake will continue to inspire and serve 4-H in Alberta for the next 100 years, or better still, for the next 1,000 years."

"The festivities included a beef-on-a-bun supper, complete with Alberta sweet corn and birthday cake," adds Rasmuson. "Many 4-H members entertained the crowd at the talent fest. There was music, comedy, fashions and lots of laughs. The campfire sing-along was filled with high energy action songs that the 4-Hers all knew and the adults tried to keep pace with. The frolic then turned to an open air country dance."

A video camera crew was on site to capture and commemorate the 20 years of the Alberta 4-H Centre. Many guests were interviewed and their memories of the creation of the centre are included on tape.

On Sunday morning, a pancake breakfast sponsored by the Spruce Grove and District Agriculture Society, started the day. Then cowboy poet, Bryn Thiessen and musician and artist, Ben Crane led the inter-denominational church service. The message, in rhyme, led the congregation into a deeper appreciation of 'what things are important – the Creator and the creation'.

Contact: *Carol Sullivan*
(403)422-4H4H

The question of baling straw

During the fall, many Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district offices receive calls from farmers asking about the current price of straw. For many, this is an attempt to discover market prices in order to value straw that is already baled.

"Straw has a value to the farmer growing the straw as well as to the farmer buying it," says John Erdman, farm management specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The decision to bale straw should always be made against the value of the straw spread back on the land. In many cases, the market price of straw is below the cost of the straw in the first place. This would mean that the straw producer is buying it at a higher price than the user. Selling straw below cost could mean that the producer is losing or subsidizing the user by thousands of dollars per season."

The cost of straw can be easily calculated. It is the sum of the nutrients in the straw – the nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, sulfur, carbon and micronutrients, plus the cost of baling and stacking, less the cost of extra tillage passes required to incorporate heavy straw crops and less the value of weed seed removal in the chaff. The nutrient value in straw is $15 to $20 per ton or about seven to 10 cents per pound. The value of the carbon (organic matter) will vary depending on the type of soil and amount of carbon already present. Some estimates have placed it up to the same value as all the other nutrients, but for illustration purpose only, assume $5 per ton.

"Baling and stacking aren't free and these costs can vary widely between farms," says Erdman. "The custom rates of $6 per bale to bale and $2 to stack can be used. Keep in mind that there are cases where a farmer's cost exceeds the custom rate."

Extra heavy straw crops require extra tillage to properly incorporate them and these costs reduce the value of straw that is spread behind the combine. If an average of two extra tillage passes are required, this would cost about $4 per pass per acre or about $4 per ton in a two ton straw crop. The value of weed seed removal should be included in valuing the cost of spreading straw as spreading weed seeds is going to cost in terms of weed control at some point. This value may be lower depending on how long the straw sits (seeds fall through the swath) and if there are no serious weed problems.

"The result is that straw costs about $20 per ton behind the combine and $35 or more at the stack," says Erdman. "The decision to bale shouldn't be based on the actual market price alone, but on which use provides the straw producer with the greatest long-term return. It's a bidding war between the farm where it was grown and the farm that might wish to buy it. The grower has already bid by buying the inputs."

Contact: *John Erdman*
(403)632-5400

August – high and dry

"August is usually the third wettest month of the year," says Peter Dzikowski, agri-weather resource specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development." The overall provincial average rainfall this August was 15 per cent below normal and the provincial average temperature was above normal. What makes this significant is that this below normal rainfall comes on the heels of a very dry July."

The provincial average precipitation of 47.6 mm was 8.2 mm below the 1961 to 1990 average of 55.8 mm for August

"The north eastern and north western regions were the driest, reporting about two thirds of normal August precipitation," says Dzikowski. "The south, central and Peace regions reported near normal precipitation. Across the province, amounts ranging from 13.4 to 93.1 mm, or 31 to 179 per cent of normal, were reported. Milk River recorded the greatest precipitation departure, receiving 57.4 mm of precipitation or 179 per cent of normal."

The warm sunny weather in August provided the much needed heat for late developing crops. Provincial average temperature was 0.5 degrees above the 1961 to 1990 average of 15.8 degrees C

Temperatures were about 1° C above normal in three northern regions and slightly above normal in central and southern regions. Most Alberta locations reported monthly average temperatures ranging from zero to 2.5 degrees above normal. Elk Island reported the greatest temperature departure, 2.5 degrees above the monthly average of 15.0 degrees. The averages are based on data recorded at 59 Environment Canada climate stations across Alberta.

Contact: *Peter Dzikowski*
(403)427-3594

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Agri-News Briefs

Emergency repair parts

Harvest time is busy enough for farmers without having to wait for parts for emergency repairs. Under regulations of the Farm Implement Act, during the normal season of use parts must be received within 72 hours (three working days – Monday to Friday). Additional costs, such as air freight, are payable by the farmer. It is the responsibility of the farmer to ensure that the parts are ordered as Emergency Repair Parts or repairs are identified as Machine Down. Casual calls placing an order will not receive the same immediate attention as those specified as emergency. The three-day turn-around time also only applies when the person placing the order is the original owner of the machine and the machine is 10 years old or less. Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development produces an Obsolete Parts Book that lists hard to find parts. Call the Farm Implement Act Administration at (403)427-2188 and one will be sent out to you. Farmers who are having difficulty locating a part are encouraged to call the office as they may be able to assist in locating the part. FIAA staff are in contact with dealers who may have those hard to find, older parts in stock. Distributors and manufacturers are also very helpful in locating that hard to find part.

New publication studies beef industry expansion

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Beef Product Team has produced a publication about Alberta's cattle industry opportunities to expand and factors that contribute and limit that expansion. The publication deals with the cow/calf and the feedlot sector. Resources, such as water, sustainable pasture, hay, silage and feed grains, are itemized in relation to present conditions and the impact potential growth may have on these resources. World market growth offers many opportunities for the cattle industry in the province. The working group of specialists investigates many aspects of the natural resource and environmental limits to expansion in the province and the results have been published in the Resources for Beef Industry Expansion in Alberta. Copies of the publication are available for $20 (plus GST) from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6 or by calling toll-free 1-800-292-5697 or 427-0391 in Edmonton. Add $2.00 plus GST for shipping and handling.

Alberta Hort Congress

The 1997 Alberta Horticultural Congress and the Prairie West Horticulture Trade Show will be held at the Mayfield Inn, Edmonton, on November 6 to 8, 1997. The Congress conference and trade show have much to offer the serious professional grower. The Congress features 50 conference seminars and 224 trade booths. Keynote speakers include: Brian Smith, 1996 Grower of the Year, U.K., and Marilyn Grey, humorist, Lynnwood, U.S. For more information, contact Shirley Alton (403)417-0859, Alberta Horticultural Congress, R.R. 6, Edmonton, AB T5B 4K3, or fax (403)417-0862

Shelterbelt tree workshop

Albertans interested in shelterbelt trees are invited to attend a workshop being held in three locations in October. The workshop agenda covers topics such as: the care and planting of a shelterbelt; wildlife enhancement of a shelterbelt; and, rejuvenating a mature shelterbelt. A demonstration planting using plastic mulch and bark mulch is also planned for each workshop. Workshops are being held at the Westerner Exposition, Red Deer on October 8, 1997; the regional Agriculture office in Airdrie on October 9, 1997; and at the Heritage Inn, High River on October 10, 1997. Advance registration is $10.00 and will be accepted until October 1. Registration at the door is $15.00. For further information or to pre-register, contact Rick Owen at (403)224-3407. The workshop is a co-operative effort of PFRA, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Alberta Conservation Association, County Ag fieldmen and Alberta Nurseries.

Precision farming courses

Starting in 1998, Olds College will offer precision farming courses to familiarize producers with Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and Geographic Information Systems (GIS). A total of 12 courses are proposed and it is anticipated that 5000 students will take the courses at the College over the next five years. Greg Reinhardt, project manager, will be directly involved with the development and delivery of a variety of modules related to the project. Base funding for the project is provided by the Canadian Adaptation Rural Development Fund (CARDF). Olds College has also formed alliances with several industry partners to ensure the success of the project. For more information, contact Doug Pearce, Dean of Agricultural Technology and College Accessing, at (403)556-8284, Olds, or Greg Reinhardt (403)932-1749, Cochrane

AGRI-NEWS

September 22, 1997

CANADIANA

SEP 26 1997

Good growing season for most Alberta farmers

The provincial average precipitation totals for April to August were 268.4 mm, 99 per cent of normal and very near last year's totals. The province averaged 196 growing degree days, about one day ahead of the long term average.

In many parts of the province, conditions differed quite a bit from what the provincial averages show. For example, the annual total precipitation at Peace River was 352.6 mm, 159 per cent of its long term average. This was typical for much of the Peace Region.

In contrast, Bow Island reported about one third of that amount, 128.8 mm, 60 per cent of its 1961 to 1990 average.

"The growing season started with cool dry April weather," says Peter Dzikowski, agri-weather resource specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Albertans were enjoying warm dry weather and thinking summer the last half of April and the first half of May. Then, shades of winter returned as cool arctic air combined with moisture from the Pacific, brought 20 to 40 mm of rain mixed with heavy snow.

"The spring snow storm combined with a wet June providing a late start to the growing season. It also topped up soil moisture reserves."

July turned out to be much drier. Good soil moisture reserves, combined with near average temperatures and heat units in July provided good growing conditions in most areas, although there were dry areas in east-central and southern Alberta.

"July temperatures were near normal and precipitation totals were well below normal," says Dzikowski. "Crops in southern and central regions showed signs of drought stress while excess moisture stressed crops in the Peace and northern central regions. In addition, severe summer weather also caused damage to crops and property in parts of Alberta. There were reports of hail, damaging winds, funnel clouds and flooding in northern Alberta."

Warm sunny weather returned in August providing much needed heat for the late developing crops.

April precipitation totals were below normal. Precipitation was above normal in May and June providing plenty of moisture for the crops to get established. However, high soil moisture and cool temperatures delayed seeding operations and slowed crop growth and development. July and August precipitation totals were below normal allowing crops to develop rapidly.

"Growing degree day totals for April 1 to August 31 were one week behind in the central region, about normal for the southern region and a week ahead in the north east, north

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
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west and Peace regions," adds Dzikowski. "These averages are based on data recorded at 38 Environment Canada climate stations across Alberta."

From a crop perspective, ample rainfall in most of Alberta and near average temperatures and heat units provided good growing conditions for crops. Satellite imagery confirmed that crop and pasture conditions in most of the province were generally much better than normal except in east-central Alberta. The frequent and abundant rain also provided suitable conditions for crop diseases to develop, however the dry July reduced most disease concerns.

Contact: *Peter Dzikowski*
(403)427-3594

Soil testing is an important tool

Less than 15 per cent of Alberta farms are soil tested each year. This is a missed opportunity for farmers as soil sampling and testing can give an excellent inventory of plant available nutrients and other soil chemical factors important for crop production. This inventory is the basis for recommending additional nutrients for crop production on individual fields.

"Nitrogen and phosphorus are the most commonly deficient nutrients in Canadian prairie soils," says Dr. Ross McKenzie, soil fertility researcher with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Lethbridge. "Potassium and sulphur deficiencies occur in particular areas and soil types. Calcium and magnesium are contained in lime, plentiful in most prairie soils, and deficiency problems are rare. Research has found micronutrient deficiency problems are not common on the prairies. However, specific soil conditions have been identified where inadequate levels of micronutrients occur. In central Alberta, on the black, gray-black transition soils and organic soils, copper (Cu) deficiency problems and significant responses to Cu fertilizer have been measured."

Soil nutrient levels vary from year to year and frequently will vary within fields, even on fields that seem to be quite uniform. It is necessary to follow recommended steps for soil sampling and testing to develop a sound, ongoing soil fertility management program.

"An understanding of general nutrient status can be obtained by soil testing," says McKenzie. "Nitrogen (N) soil testing is recommended annually as the available N can change considerably from year to year. Changes depend upon environmental conditions such as rainfall and temperature patterns during a growing season, type and yield of crop harvested, date of harvest, fall tillage and amount of fertilizer applied to the previous crop. Potassium and phosphorus levels don't change substantially in a soil over a period of several years. Sampling for potassium and phosphorous may be conducted every two or three years, or when changing crop type."

Sampling for sulphur should be done annually, unless a previous test indicates that the available levels to 60 cm (24 inches) are in excess of 55 kg/ha (50 lb/ac). In the latter case, a test for sulphur every two to three years is adequate.

"Soil testing is not an infallible guide to crop production and other factors also come into play," adds McKenzie. "Soil tests do help reduce the guesswork in making fertilizer management decisions. In the past, Alberta farmers who have soil tested, have generally applied significantly more fertilizer than farmers who didn't soil test and that's reflected in crop yields. In many instances, farmers who don't soil test may be applying less nitrogen fertilizer than is needed to obtain the most economical yield."

Soil testing is only as good as the quality of the soil samples and good sampling procedures must be employed. Whether the sampling is being done by a custom operator or a producer, be sure to be familiar with proper soil sampling procedures.

Contact: *Dr. Ross McKenzie*
(403)381-5126

How to properly soil sample fields

Poor soil sampling technique is a major problem that causes variation in fertilizer recommendations. Good soil sampling procedures start with determining where, when and how to soil sample each field. Samples must be taken from the correct soil depths and proper equipment and supplies must be used when collecting and handling soil samples.

"Soil sampling should be done on an individual field basis," says Dr. Ross McKenzie, soil fertility researcher with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Lethbridge. "Samples from different fields should not be mixed. Begin by evaluating each field to determine representative areas. Sample hilly fields with knolls, slopes or depressions separately from mid-slope positions to ensure any potential sulphur or other nutrient problems are detected. Major areas within fields having distinctly different soil properties, such as texture, should be sampled and fertilized as separate fields because of different nutrient requirements."

Problem areas, such as saline spots, poorly drained depressions and eroded knolls, should not be sampled unless they represent a significant portion of the field. Other abnormal areas, old manure piles, burnpiles, haystacks, corrals, fence rows or farmstead sites, should be avoided. At least 15 to 20 sampling sites are required for each field to give a good representative sample. There are four basic methods for taking soil samples:

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Random Soil Sampling – is taking soil samples in a random pattern across a field, avoiding unusual or problem areas. Generally, the field should not be more than 80 acres in size and have been cropped uniformly in the past. To obtain a representative soil sample, 15 to 20 sites must be sampled This is the most common method of sampling presently used in Alberta.

Benchmark Soil Sampling – involves selecting uniquely different areas within a field and sampling each area separately. Selection is based on soil types, topography and crop growth. Soil samples are taken from each specific area each year to use as a guide for fertilizing all similar areas within the field. This method is rapidly gaining popularity in Alberta, particularly with farmers who are adopting precision farming techniques.

Grid Soil Sampling – is when a field is sampled in an organized grid pattern. Soil sample frequency may range from taking one sample in 0.5 acre units to one sample for each 5.0 acre units of the field. Smaller soil sampling units give greater accuracy. The advantage of this method is that a field map can be prepared for each nutrient and be used for variable rate fertilization and precision farming. The cost of taking the soil samples and the soil analysis is very high and not economical for many producers.

Topographic Soil Sampling – separate soil sampling sites are selected based on topography. A set of soil samples is taken from each uniquely different topographic area within a field

"It's important to use the proper equipment and supplies when conducting soil sampling," says McKenzie. "A soil sampling probe is best for taking samples to the 60 cm (24 inch) sampling depth. Use clean labeled plastic pails for collecting samples. Metal pails should not be used if micronutrient testing is being done. Soil sample augers can also be used but it can be difficult to accurately separate soil samples into 0 - 15, 15 - 30 and 30 - 60 cm depths."

Tools may be borrowed from a fertilizer dealer, your local Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district office, or can be purchased from some soil testing laboratories or fertilizer dealers. Information sheets, soil sample cartons and shipping boxes are available from soil testing laboratories

"Ideally, samples should be taken just prior to seeding," says McKenzie. "However, this can be very difficult as it leaves little time to plan a fertilizer program and purchase the fertilizer in time for seeding. The best alternative is to obtain soil samples taken in the fall once soil microbial activity has declined, after the soil surface temperature drops to less than 7°C. At this temperature, soil processes that cause changes in soil nutrients proceed more slowly and changes in plant available nutrient levels are not great. It is usually safe to sample soil in most areas of the province after the beginning of October."

Many soil testing labs suggest that a zero to 30 cm (0 - 12 inch) depth sample is adequate. However, nutrients available for plants are found at different depths and for this reason McKenzie recommends that soil is sampled at different depths to ensure proper evaluation. For ideal plant nutrient evaluation, it is suggested that samples be taken from the zero to 15 cm (0 - 6 inch) and 15 to 30 cm (6 - 12 inch) separately and also take samples from the 30 to 60 cm (12 - 24 inch) depths. Keep samples from each depth in a separate container

Immediately after samples have been taken

- mix the soil in each container thoroughly in order to obtain a homogeneous mixture
- remove the soil and spread on a piece of clean paper
- allow the soil to completely air dry at a temperature of not more than 30°C (do not dry in an oven or at a high temperature since this can change the levels of some nutrients)
- take care to avoid contamination of the samples with materials such as commercial fertilizer, manure, salt, water and dust
- a fan may be used to ensure constant air flow over samples to enhance drying

"Proper handling is a must," adds McKenzie. "Once samples are thoroughly dry, fill the soil sample cartons, labeling each carton with the correct field number and sample depth Complete an information sheet on cropping and fertilizer history and mail to a reputable soil testing laboratory. Soil testing services and fertilizer recommendations are not free. Consult with your local Alberta Agriculture crop specialist for details of locations of private soil testing laboratories."

Contact: Ross McKenzie
(403)381-5126

Computer training for farm managers

A private company in Chinook is moving into its ninth year of providing computer training for farmers. Wayside Computer Training and Consulting, offers a 132 hour comprehensive computer training program

"By using computer technology, the farm manager learns how to improve their management skills," says Jackie Cornell of Wayside. "They learn how to identify and promote responsible management practices."

One class runs each day of the work week, with a maximum of eight students in each class. Students attend for 22 weeks, one day per week, six hours per day. Students seldom miss but if they know they will be away, they can find a student on another day and trade time slots. The same material is taught in each of the five running sessions. As well as classroom training, Wayside offers unlimited telephone support to students during and after the course.

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"The course is tailor made for the farm manager and begins with teaching students basic computer skills," says Arla Trueblood, farm business management program representative with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "It builds weekly on previously learned concepts. Spreadsheets, and how they work with an accounting program, are introduced. Some time is spent on an accounting program with a case study. Students are encouraged to set up their own books in the program at the same time. They learn about bank reconciliations, balance sheets and income statements. Basic word processing skills are taught to benefit the farm manager. The course ends with training on using a modem to source information and event market products on the Internet."

Participants pay one-half of the $2,000 (plus GST) cost of the course, the Canada/Alberta Farm Business Management Program (FBMP) covers the balance. "Even with limited public advertising, the last few years we've had such overwhelming response to the course that we have to turn people away because there is no more room in the classes," adds Cornell. "We sometimes book for this course a year in advance. When students come back to repeat the course in two to three years, you know they must have felt they were getting value for the training dollars spent. Some of our students have even encouraged their spouse to come the next year."

Feedback from participants shows that the time taken for the course is more than made up in the time saved providing information for the many forms farmers fill out and with finances being handled more efficiently. The computer is used to maximum efficiency to improve the profitability of the farm.

This year, due to a partnership with Hanna and District Adult Lifelong Learning (HDALL) and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD), Wayside Computer Training and Consulting is able to offer a full slate of courses in Hanna as well as in Chinook. HDALL provides the computers for students to use and AAFRD supplies the space. The second location means that spaces are still available for this winter's training session.

For more information about the Using Computers for Farm Management course, contact Jackie Cornell at Wayside, (403)326-3763, Cereal.

Contact: *Arla Trueblood*
(403)954-3745

Jackie Cornell
(403)326-3763

Autumn needle shed

The shortening days and the cool nights means trees will be changing colour and the leaves will be falling to the ground. This loss of leaves is not just something that happens to poplar and lilac but to the evergreens, such as spruce, pine, cedar and juniper, as well. The evergreens will drop their needles because they no longer help to sustain the trees and are a draw on the life support system of the tree.

"Autumn needle shed is probably the most noticeable in pines," says Shelley Barkley, information officer at the Crop Diversification Centre - South, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The foliage on the inside of conifers, closest to the trunk, turns yellow or gold, then brown and eventually fall off. Usually this process goes unnoticed because it's gradual, but sometimes many needles will discolor all at once. This can be very alarming because it looks like the tree is dying."

Pine will hold their needles for three to four years, while spruce and fir will hold their needles longer. Pine needles grow on the branch in bundles or groups of two, three or five. Spruce needles grow singly, while cedars and some junipers have scale like leaves covering branchlets instead of needles. When pine shed those inner needles, they drop the bundles, spruce drop single needles (not necessarily the oldest needles) and the cedar and juniper drop entire branchlets.

"Stress to the plant, caused by drought, poorly drained soils, transplant shock or spider mites, can cause it to drop more needles than normal," adds Barkley. "Even after a stressful winter, some needles can be dropped in the spring. Evergreens grow at the tips of the branches so once lost, these inner needles will not be replaced. Not to fear though, they will put on new growth at the tips next spring and the area of lost needles will not be noticeable."

Although needle shed is a regular occurrence, keeping evergreens as healthy as possible with good watering practices and insect control can lessen the amount of needles lost.

Remember to water evergreens well in late fall, the end of September or early October. This will help prevent damage to the root systems during winter.

Contact: *Shelley Barkley*
(403)362-1305

Agriculture tax update seminar

The 17th annual ***Agriculture Tax Update for Professionals*** seminar, for accountants and lawyers is scheduled in six locations between October 21 and October 29, 1997. The seminar is coordinated by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development in association with Rural Education and Development Association (REDA)

"This annual seminar is retaining its popularity," says Merle Good, coordinator and provincial tax specialist with the agricultural business management branch of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development in Olds. "Last year, just under 700 registrants attended the seminars, making it the largest public taxation seminar in western Canada."

The theme for this year's seminar is ***Success is achieved not only by doing the right thing, but also by doing things right***. To meet this objective, the seminar will focus primarily on an in-depth review of 'how to do it' rather than 'what's new' in tax planning for the agricultural industry. The seminar agenda focuses on strategies for third-party cash farm sales, unique planning opportunities for inter-generational farm transfers and strategies for farmers with no eligible heirs.

The program will also include specific income tax issues and concerns facing farm clients. An expanded Tips and Traps section, including current cases, letters and Revenue Canada's interpretations, will be featured again this year.

"Stan Church, an agricultural lawyer and partner with the firm Beaumont Church in Calgary, will be speaking at this year's seminar," adds Good. "Church has been actively involved in the agricultural and the oil and gas area throughout his career and has numerous farm clients who rely on his expertise."

Dean Gallimore, a tax partner with KPMG Peat Marwick Thorne, in Lethbridge, is also a featured speaker. Gallimore, back by popular demand, specializes in agricultural income tax and tax management strategies in estate and business succession planning

Seminar scheduling is:

- Grande Prairie – October 21
- Edmonton – October 22
- Red Deer – October 23
- Lethbridge – October 27
- Calgary – October 28
- Lloydminster – October 29

Registration, includes GST, is $170 before October 7 and $195 after that date. The fee includes lunch, coffee breaks and a binder of related materials. If you are able to attend the seminar, the seminar proceedings only can be purchased at a cost of $95.

For more information and a brochure on the seminar, contact the farm business management branch in Olds at (403)556-4240, toll free by dialling 310-0000 to connect to the RITE system. To register, contact REDA at (403)451-5959, Edmonton. A copy of the seminar brochure can also be obtained by accessing the website:

http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/economic/taxation

Contact:	*Merle Good*	*Beth Moritz*
	(403)556-4237	*(403)556-4321*

Agri-News Briefs

SIM courses

- **FutureSIM** is a comprehensive course on commodity futures and options that offers experience in marketing. Through simulation, FutureSIM allows anyone to work with the markets in the same scale as their real-world farming operation. To the farmer, this means learning by experimenting with their own type of production and scale of operation. The FutureSIM is scheduled for October 14 to 16, 1997 at the Convention Inn South in Edmonton Registration deadline is October 1, 1997 and workshop fee is $225 (includes GST).
- The **CattleSIM** is a beef market simulation course designed for the cow-calf produce, backgrounder or feedlot operator. CattleSIM simulates all the major pricing and delivery alternatives including: three auction marts to buy and sell at; Canadian and American slaughter prices: live, rail or contract; futures and options; and a breeding heifer market. It is a hands-on experience where the participant sets the marketing strategies and experiments with a realistic and exciting market. The CattleSIM is being held at the Holiday Inn in Red Deer on October 20 to 22, 1997. The Workshop fee is $225 (includes GST). Registration deadline is October 8, 1997

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- The newest of the SIM series, the **GrainSIM** gives participants two and a half years of real world markets in a ten turn classroom game format where they learn to develop and use marketing plans and evaluate market alternatives. The course adapts itself to individual district yields and production costs, fertilizer and weed control regime, and district debt and interest levels. Participants bring their own actual farm acreage, mix of crops and marketing costs to the simulation and work with the entire Canadian grain industry (five different crops, 11 pricing alternatives, seven delivery alternatives and grain buyers, five commodity futures contracts and options on futures contracts). The GrainSIM is planned for October 28 to 30, 1997 at the Port O'Call Inn, Calgary. Registration deadline is October 15, 1997 and workshop fee is $225 (includes GST).

Payment for all SIM courses can be made by cheque or money order (payable to the Provincial Treasurer), VISA or MasterCard. For further information, contact Faye Douglas Phillips, home study program, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (403)422-7755 in Edmonton, toll free in Alberta by dialing 310-0000 first.

Cattle and calf inventory

An estimated 14.913 million head make up the Canadian herd of cattle and calves. This estimate shows a decrease of 0.8 per cent from the 15.026 million head reported a year earlier. The July 1, 1997 inventory estimate shows a decline for all classes of cattle, with the exception of slaughter heifers which posted an increase of 10.1 per cent (0.955 million) over 1996. Some of the declines as of July 1, 1997 were: beef cows (4.717 million), beef heifers for replacement (0.840 million), slaughter steers (1.378 million) and calves (4.991 million). Alberta's cattle and calf inventory was also down for the first time in 11 years. Total cattle and calves in the province was estimated at 5.605 million head, down 1.1 per cent for 1996. Alberta's decline in 1997 cattle and calf inventory was characteristic of all the western provinces with the exception of Manitoba, whose inventory grew by 3.9 per cent. Alberta continues to lead the country in cattle and calf inventories (5.605 million head), followed by Saskatchewan with 2.885 million head and Ontario at 2.259 million head. Alberta currently accounts for 51.7 per cent of the estimated western Canada total cattle and calf inventory of 10.834 million head. Western Canada hold 72.6 per cent of the total Canadian inventory of 14.913 million. For further information, contact Reynold Jaipaul, statistics and production economics branch of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, (403)427-5376.

Hogs in Alberta

As of July 1, 1997, the estimated total number of hogs on Canadian farms was 12.126 million, up marginally by 0.2 per cent from the total of 12.101 million a year earlier. The percentage growth in Alberta's hog inventory at July 1, 1997 was much more pronounced. An estimated 2.015 million head in Alberta represents an increase of almost two per cent over last year figures. Increases were noted for all classes of hogs with the exception of breeding boars which remained flat at 15,000 head. Alberta and B.C. were the only two western provinces to show inventory growth in 1997. Of the estimated total western Canadian hog population of 4.995 million head, Alberta now accounts for 40.3 per cent or about 0.8 per cent higher than in 1996. Alberta continues to rank third in hog inventories in Canada, behind Quebec with 3.467 million and Ontario with 3.308 million. Several factors have spurred hog production in Alberta, including strong hog prices because of reduced U.S. production; strong domestic and foreign demand; and, excess slaughter capacity. For further information, contact Reynold Jaipaul, statistics and production economics branch of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, (403)427-5376.

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AGRI-NEWS

September 29, 1997

Operating costs in vegetable processing low in Alberta

The cost of operating a vegetable processing plant in Alberta is about 15 per cent lower than anywhere else in west-central North America.

A recent study by SVS, Strategic Value Systems Edmonton, compared the cost of operating a vegetable processing plant in Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario, Oregon, Illinois, California and Texas using a computer simulation model. The model examined vegetable processors' costs for serving markets in western Canada, Ontario, Quebec, the central and western United States and the Far East.

The study found that all costs, including raw materials, packaging, labour, utilities, transportation, investment and taxes, were lower in Alberta.

"Vegetable processors who want to expand their operations don't need to look any further than Alberta," says Pat Black, Minister of Alberta Economic Development. "Alberta offers lower operating costs, higher after-tax profits, consistently high-quality raw materials, a stable and well-educated workforce and a government that supports the business sector. These factors combine to make our province a very attractive place in which to invest and do business."

Alberta is also an attractive location for processors as the province offers a virtually unlimited capacity to increase supply and grow new crops. By expanding the province's irrigated land base and diversifying vegetable crops, Alberta producers could greatly increase their capacity to supply local markets and respond to new export demands, the study noted.

Irrigation drives four per cent of Alberta's cultivated land to produce about 16 per cent of the province's total crop production. As a result, agricultural products that come from irrigated crops represent 12 per cent of the total provincial gross domestic product (GDP) for primary agriculture and 26 per cent of the total provincial GDP for processed products.

"This study proves what we've known all along," stated Ed Stelmach, Minister of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "We'll now be able to use this study to attract more businesses to invest and locate in Alberta. Our province is a prime location for vegetable processors, with its high-quality fresh produce and superior cost advantages. These factors are especially important as the agriculture industry moves toward its market opportunity of $10 billion in primary production and $20 billion in value-added processing by 2005."

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

The study was commissioned by Alberta Economic Development and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development at a cost of approximately $25,000. Copies of the study can be obtained through the communications branch of Alberta Economic Development and through the publications office, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6.

Contact: Sheila Munro (403) 427-0528

Ron Glen (403) 427-2137

Fall weaning plan

As producers decide when to wean and what to do with the calves after weaning it becomes clear that there is no generic answer – it differs from farm to farm.

"Pasture and feed supplies play a major role in deciding when to wean," says Trevor Yurchak, beef specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "If producers have a surplus of excellent quality pasture, late weaning can pay. Average or poor pasture may not provide the weight gain producers are striving for. Creep feeding can produce better gains, and with cheaper grain may be considered as a cost effective alternative."

Cow condition is also a very important factor. If cows are in a lower body condition than desired, early weaning should be looked at. It's cheaper to build body condition on pasture than in the pens, and weaned cows respond faster to increased nutrition than nursing cows.

"Market forecasts play an important role in weaning and marketing plans," says Yurchak. "Every farmer has a different view of the future and where the highest profits lie. This is something that forces every producer to do their own calculations."

One scenario that may have benefits throughout the winter is to wean and sell the heavier calves in early October, those over 700 lbs. The money received is then used for expenses and to purchase smaller calves during the fall run. The remaining herd, plus the newly purchased calves can be backgrounded and/or finished, depending on market predictions.

"The bottom line is that as long as a producer knows why they are doing what they're doing, they won't go wrong," adds Yurchak. "Situations like this are the ideal times to contact the local beef specialist. We can assist with weaning plans, marketing plans, rations, feeding programs and number crunching. Getting some assistance or just talking over a farm operation's best options are only a call away."

Contact: Trevor Yurchak (403)675-2252 or 1-800-264-5693

Alberta sugar beet industry receives development funding

Alberta's sugar beet industry just got a little sweeter.

Lyle Vanclief, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Ed Stelmach, Alberta's Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, announced today the signing of a bilateral agreement to contribute $740,000 each to create a $1.48 million Sugar Beet Industry Development Fund (IDF).

"The Sugar Beet Industry Development Fund will boost research and industry development in this important sector of Alberta's economy," said Vanclief. "Competitiveness is key to growth in the sugar beet industry, and this fund will help promote and strengthen Alberta's competitive advantages."

"Alberta is one of the highest quality areas for sugar beet production in North America," said Stelmach. "Since Alberta growers have been paid based on quality since 1989, they have made enormous improvements and for the last two years have been among the top producers on the continent."

The fund will be administered by the Sugar Beet IDF committee established by the Alberta Sugar Beet Growers' Marketing Board.

"The voting members of the Sugar Beet IDF Committee are all growers themselves, and were selected by growers to represent their interests," said Mark Kuryvial, president of the Alberta Sugar Beet Growers' Marketing Board. "These Committee members will work hard to ensure that the fund maximizes future returns for all growers."

The new fund is intended to promote research and industry development activities with the objective of enhancing the competitiveness of Alberta's sugar beet industry.

The federal government's portion of the money comes from Alberta's share of the existing federal safety net funding. Alberta's portion of the funding also comes from safety net budgets previously allocated to the National Tripartite Stabilization Program (NTSP). Following the early termination of the NTSP, governments and industry have agreed these remaining funds would be best spent on industry development.

The sugar beet industry has had more good news in recent months. The industry has been very confident since the expansion of the Rogers Sugar plant in Taber was announced in April, 1997. The expansion means 15,000 more acres of sugar beets will be planted between 1998 and 1999. The expansion could increase the value of the industry from the current $57 million to as much as $85 million by 1999.

Contact: Vern Greenshields (613) 759-1020

Ron Glen (403) 427-2137

Mark Kuryvial (403) 223-1110

Agri-News Briefs

Alberta sheep and lambs buck the national trend

Alberta's sheep and lamb inventory grew by almost four per cent in 1997 while the Canadian sheep and lamb inventory slipped 1.8 per cent from July 1996 totals. As of July 1, 1997, the province had an estimated total of 253,900 head compared to 244,500 in 1996. National numbers were down most notably for breeding stock which was estimated at 440,300. This number of breeding ewes and rams represents a drop of 3.5 per cent from the previous year. Total estimated sheep and lamb population in Canada is 831,200 head and 421,800 of these are located in western Canada. Alberta, the largest sheep and lamb producing province accounts for 60.2 per cent of the western Canada totals or 30.5 per cent of the national total. For more information, contact Reynold Jaipaul, statistics and production economics branch, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, (403)427-5376 (outside the Edmonton area, dial 310-0000 first for toll free access).

AgFood Alliance – new website

Alberta's agri-food industry has a new tool to help capitalize on international markets for its products. AgFood Alliance is a website that contains a wealth of useful information for agriculture and food industries. The AgFood Alliance is a joint industry-government network that provides the agri-food industry with an electronic means of sharing and accessing current market news from an Alberta system of foreign contacts and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development staff. It is also a means of global promotion for Alberta companies and their products and services. The profile section of the site lists 395 Alberta companies, over 50 of these are AgFood Alliance members. Membership includes access to a Members Only section, where timely market intelligence and research can be accessed and to various discussion groups. Currently, there is no fee to become a member. For more information, contact John Larson, project manager, marketing services division, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, (403)422-7090 (outside the Edmonton area, dial 310-0000 first for toll free access).

Target farming on a budget

Advances in global positioning systems (GPS) have changed farming to allow producers map their fields with an accuracy of within three feet. The systems help farmers pinpoint problem area, whether the problem is weeds or nutrient deficiencies. GPS is a great system, but it also requires a substantial capital investment to take full advantage of the technology. For farmers who do not have access to GPS the same principal can be used by keeping a close watch during harvest. Start by getting an aerial photo of the land being farmed, this gives a visual assessment of the land being worked. Overlay the photo with a sheet of acetate and start marking information on it. Although not as sophisticated nor quite as accurate as GPS, it will give a record of where yield is dismal and good to excellent in other areas. The end result is a map of the fields that gives an indication where fertilizer is needed, where weeds were a problem and where yield was exceptional. A visual picture of each field goes a long way toward making production decisions. During harvest, keep your eyes open and your pencil sharp. For more information, contact Ron Hockridge, crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development in Wetaskiwin, (403)361-1240.

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AGRI-NEWS

October 6, 1997

CANADIANA

OCT 7 1997

Agriculture Minister leads trade mission to Asia

> *"There are many exciting opportunities in Asia for Alberta agri-businesses. We must move forward to capitalize on these new markets."*
>
> **Ed Stelmach, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development**

Ed Stelmach, the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, is leading a delegation of Alberta agri-businesses to Japan, China and Taiwan on a trade mission to Asia, from October 4 to October 21.

"Alberta's agriculture industry is gearing up for a major expansion over the next several years," said Mr. Stelmach. "Consumers in Asia are demanding the kinds of high-quality products that Alberta is famous for. This mission is another opportunity for Alberta companies to reinforce the fact that this province is open for business, whether it's in investment, production or processing."

Producers and processors are increasing their ability to meet the specific needs of international customers. Producing what customers want, not just selling what we produce, is of critical importance, particularly in the Asian market. It is this specialization and diversification that will help the agriculture industry in Alberta achieve its market goal of $10 billion primary agriculture production, with another $20 billion in value-added processed goods by 2005.

Stelmach's first stop is in Tokyo, Japan. Japan is the world's largest net importer of agri-food products and Alberta's second-largest trading partner (next to the U.S.) in primary agriculture and agri-food products. Between 1991 and 1995 Alberta exports of value-added agri-food products increased by 77 per cent with beef and pork products leading the way.

A key element of the Minister's visit to Japan is establishing new marketing links for Alberta agri-food businesses. During his visit, the Minister will meet with Japanese agricultural producers and processors, distributors and retailers interested in selling Alberta food products. The Minister will also meet with key government officials and will join Premier Ralph Klein at key points during the Premier's trade and energy mission to Asia. The Minister will stop in Miyazaki and Fukuoka to meet with producers and processors to promote the Alberta Advantage in agriculture before rejoining the Premier's mission in Beijing, China.

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

China is Alberta's third largest export market for agricultural products and services, including wheat, malting barley and cattle hides. China's rapidly expanding economy and its plans to expand and modernize its agricultural base means that this country will continue to be a major market for Alberta's primary agricultural products over the next several years. Business development will be a key element of this portion of the Minister's trip.

While in China, Stelmach will meet with key government officials and Alberta companies doing business in China. A highlight of the Chinese portion of the mission will be the signing of a beef technical agreement between Alberta and the Chinese government. Premier Klein will join the Minister for the signing ceremony. The agreement will help increase technical support services for China as it develops its beef industry.

The Minister will also travel to Harbin, to meet with key officials with the province of Heilongjiang. The rapidly increasing Chinese middle class is beginning to generate a market for Alberta food products and Alberta's long-standing and important twinning relationship with Heilongjiang is helping several Alberta companies interested in establishing exports to China. From Harbin, the Minister will travel back through Beijing, stopping briefly at the Canadian Embassy for the product launch of a Chinese joint venture with an Alberta dairy company before traveling to Taiwan.

Alberta's agriculture exports to Taiwan reached $44 million in 1996. Alberta's major export products to Taiwan are cattle hides, barley and dehydrated alfalfa products. Beef, beef by-products, canola oil-based products, snack items and beverages are major future growth target areas for Alberta exporters.

In both Kaohsiung and Taipei, the Minister will meet with key producers, processors and investors interested in doing business in and with Alberta. He will also meet with government officials during that time.

Members of the official delegation include Ron Glen, the Minister's Executive Assistant, and the Assistant Deputy Minister of Production and Marketing, Barry Mehr.

Travel and accommodation costs for the official delegation are estimated at $40,500, with airfare estimated at $15,000, hotel accommodation at $16,900, meals at $4,600 and ground transportation at $4,000. The final cost and business outcomes will be released in a post-mission report.

Contact:	*Ron Glen*	*John Cotton*
	(403) 427-2137	*(403) 422-2789*

Agricultural Lease Review Committee public hearings

A new committee, the Agricultural Lease Review Committee will consult with Albertans on issues regarding public land in the White Area (settled area) of the province. The Committee puts special emphasis on agricultural lease issues on public lands.

Tom Thurber, MLA for Drayton Valley-Calmar and chairman of the, announced the details of the Committee's public consultation process stating that other related issues raised will also be addressed. "Public lands are a vital heritage for all Albertans. Their management must continue to sustain this legacy. As well, their positive impact on the environment must be protected." says Thurber.

The MLAs also appointed to serve on the Committee are: Marlene Graham, MLA, Calgary Lougheed; Paul Langevin, MLA, Lac La Biche-St. Paul; Barry McFarland, MLA, Little Bow; and Ivan Strang, MLA, West Yellowhead.

The Committee's meetings with interested groups and members of the public are in 20 locations across Alberta in late October and November, 1997. Public meetings start in Brooks on October 20 and are scheduled to end in Grande Prairie on November 25.

"We want to hear from Albertans and encourage all those interested to attend the meeting in their area. These are open and accessible meetings. It is important for the Committee to hear the concerns of Albertans on these issues, but even more important to hear their suggestions for the resolution of their concerns," said Thurber.

The views and suggestions presented to the Committee will form the basis of an interim report that will be submitted to the Ministers of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and Environmental Protection who jointly manage and administer public lands in Alberta. This interim report will be made available for public review and comment later in 1998. After the public review is completed, a final report with recommendations for policy direction will be submitted to the two Ministers.

Open houses with staff from Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and Environmental Protection will be held immediately prior to each public meeting to provide information and provide clarification on public land policies and practices in the White Area.

Those wishing to make a presentation to the Committee are asked to book a time at the location of their choice by phoning (403)427-3595. This number can be connected from anywhere in the province toll-free by first dialing 310-0000. Those who have not booked a time to make a presentation prior to the start of the meeting will be included during the meeting, time permitting. Presentations will be in the order of registration.

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Written submissions to the Committee are encouraged and will also be accepted throughout the consultation process until November 30, 1997. These submissions can be sent to:

Roger Marvin
#200, 7000 - 113 Street
Edmonton AB T6H 5T6
Fax: (403) 422-4244
E-Mail: agric.lease.review@agric.gov.ab.ca

The list of public meeting dates, locations and times are included. Dates and locations will be confirmed in local papers once arrangements are complete.

Written information about the management of this public land is available from the district offices of Public Lands in Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and Land and Forest Services in Environmental Protection.

Contact: Tom Thurber, MLA *R.T. (Roger) Marvin*
(403) 415-0981 *(403) 427-3595*

Agricultural Lease Review – public meeting schedule

Brooks – October 20 (afternoon meeting)
Brooks Heritage Inn

open house	12:00 noon - 1:30 pm
public meeting	1:30 pm

Medicine Hat – October 20 (evening meeting)
Medicine Hat Lodge

open house	5:30 pm - 7:00 pm
public meeting	7:00 pm

Lethbridge – October 21 (afternoon and evening meetings)
El Rancho Travelodge

open house	12:00 noon - 1:30 pm
public meeting	1:30 pm
open house	5:30 - 7:00 pm
public meeting	7:00 pm

Nanton – October 22 (afternoon meeting)
Nanton Community Centre

open house	12:00 noon - 1:30 pm
public meeting	1:30 pm

Cochrane – October 22 (evening meeting)
Western Heritage Centre

open house	5:30 pm - 7:00 pm
public meeting	7:00 pm

Calgary – October 23 (afternoon and evening meetings)
Blackfoot Inn

open house	12:00 noon - 1:30 pm
public meeting	1:30 pm
open house	5:30 - 7:00 pm
public meeting	7:00 pm

Drumheller – November 3 (afternoon meeting)
Drumheller Inn

open house	12:00 noon - 1:30 pm
public meeting	1:30 pm

Red Deer – November 3 (evening meeting)
Red Deer Lodge

open house	5:30 pm - 7:00 pm
public meeting	7:00 pm

Rocky Mtn House – November 4 (afternoon meeting)
Rocky Mountain House Centre

open house	12:00 noon - 1:30 pm
public meeting	1:30 pm

Drayton Valley – November 4 (evening meeting)
Easyford Hall

open house	5:30 pm - 7:00 pm
public meeting	7:00 pm

Wainwright – November 5 (afternoon meeting)
Royal Canadian Legion (Worthington Branch #29)

open house	12:00 noon - 1:30 pm
public meeting	1:30 pm

St. Paul – November 5 (evening meeting)
St. Paul Senior Citizens Club

open house	5:30 pm - 7:00 pm
public meeting	7:00 pm

Lac La Biche – November 6 (afternoon meeting)
McArthur Place (McArthur Room)

open house	12:00 noon - 1:30 pm
public meeting	7:00 p.m.

Westlock – November 6 (evening meeting)
Westlock Inn

open house	5:30 pm - 7:00 pm
public meeting	7:00 pm

Edson – November 12 (afternoon meeting)
Edson and District Recreation Complex

open house	12:00 noon - 1:30 pm
public meeting	1:30 pm

Edmonton – November 13 (afternoon and evening meetings)
Regency Hotel

open house	12:00 noon - 1:30 pm
public meeting	1:30 pm
open house	5:30 - 7:00 pm
public meeting	7:00 pm

Fort Vermilion – November 24 (afternoon meeting)
Fort Vermilion Community and Cultural Complex

open house	12:00 noon - 1:30 pm
public meeting	1:30 pm

Cont'd on page 4

Peace River – November 24 (evening meeting)
Traveller's Motor Hotel
open house 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm
public meeting 7:00 pm

High Prairie – November 25 (afternoon meeting)
High Prairie Inn
open house 12:00 noon - 1:30 pm
public meeting 1:30 pm

Grande Prairie – November 25 (evening meeting)
Golden Inn
open house 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm
public meeting 7:00 pm

Cattle health and oilfields

Fully understanding the impact the oil and gas industry can have on the health of cattle is important. ***A Literature Review and Discussion of the Toxicological Hazards of Oilfield Pollutants in Cattle***, a current, state-of-the-knowledge review of published literature on the subject, is a first step in identifying areas where more research is needed. This recently released report was funded by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD) and undertaken by veterinary toxicologists at the Alberta Research Council (ARC).

Both the oil and gas industry and the cattle industry make significant contributions to Alberta's economy. While these industries co-exist successfully in agricultural areas, the proximity of cattle and oil and gas facilities can lead to accidental exposure of animals to petrochemical products and by-products.

"Provincially, the problem is small but of significant concern to producers whose animals are affected," says Dr. Ralph Christian, executive director of the Alberta Agricultural Research Institute (AARI). "It is of major importance that both industries be aware of the potential for exposure and work to gain a better understanding of the impact of exposure.

"Alberta veterinarians approached AARI requesting assistance in diagnosing or identifying exposure to these substances. This report will improve their diagnostic toxicology skills. It will help them 'organize their toolbox' of diagnostic methods to ensure they have the latest proven methods at their disposal."

This peer-reviewed report is an unabridged, updated and expanded version of the animal health section of the original *Cattle and the Oil and Gas Industry in Alberta: A Literature Review with Recommendations for Environmental Management*.

"This literature review serves as an enabling document, pinpointing gaps in knowledge and identifying research needs," says Dr. Bob Coppock, ARC research scientist. "The information gained from the comprehensive examination of published scientific literature is essential to any new research initiatives pursued in this field of animal toxicology."

ARC is actively working with others in a research capacity to understand and address the relationship between oil and gas activities and the health of cattle. As an example, the corporation is a participating member of a multi-agency steering committee of key stakeholders assembled to determine research priorities in this area and to put into practice the recommendations from the original Cattle Commission report.

ARC and AAFRD are working with the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association's continuing education program to offer a course on veterinary toxicology, with emphasis on oilfield toxicology.

The report, as well as being available to Alberta veterinarians, can be purchased for $30 plus shipping and handling and GST, from the Publications Office, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton AB T6H 5T6, or by calling toll free 1-800-292-5697.

Contact: Dr. Ralph Christian (403)422-1072

13 a lucky number for Agriculture Exchange Program

Imagine looking into a crystal ball and finding out that over the next year, you're going to go through a dozen different jobs – from a large department store, to a grocery store then a convenience store. Maybe you'll spend some time as an international purchaser, or a delivery person for a trucking company. Chances are, you wouldn't be all that happy being bounced around from job to job. Unless of course, you're a third year business student at the University of Alberta hoping to become a Seiyu exchange trainee.

It's pronounced say-you. However you say it or spell it, 13 is a lucky number for the Seiyou-Alberta Exchange Program. That's how many years Alberta Agriculture and one of Japan's largest retailers have worked together for to learn more about the Japanese consumer.

Japan is less than 50 per cent self-sufficient in food production. That means it imports a lot of the products we grow and add value to. With more working moms, the Japanese also purchase, as we do, more 'heat and eat' table-ready food products. It's a country that settles for nothing less than high quality, healthy food. That's why it looks to Canada, especially Alberta to get those products.

This is where Alberta Agriculture, the U of A Faculty of Business, and Seiyu steps in. The Japanese group has 10 huge department stores, 188 large grocery stores, and over 4 thousand convenience stores. Many have Alberta-based agriculture products on their shelves, thanks to the Seiyu program.

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"I'm sure I'll never experience anything like it again," says Brad Klak, a former exchange trainee now working for Alberta Agriculture. "To gain first hand knowledge of how the Japanese market works from the top to the bottom and knowing what kind of products they want from us, pays great dividends for the agri-businesses in Alberta."

The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development will soon see for himself how well this partnership works. Ed Stelmach, accompanied by Premier Ralph Klein, is leading a group of Alberta agri-based businesses on an Asian trade mission. They'll meet with the President of the Seiyu company and tour one of its stores the week of October 6, 1997.

In 1996, Alberta exported over $600 million in agri-food products to Japan. The Japanese market will play an important role in Alberta's desire to achieve both its $20 billion agri-food and $10 billion primary production figures by the year 2005.

Contact:	*Brad Klak*	*Barrie Harrison*
	(403)427-4244	*(403)422-7678*

4-H measures up

Leadership, teamwork and communication skills learned in their years as 4-H members are still influencing the adult lives of more than 1,100 Canadian 4-H alumni, according to a new survey. Early experience as a 4-H club member is a major benefit says former members, 90% of whom continue to be involved in one or more community organizations today. Alumni also report gains in knowledge, self-confidence, and decision-making ability helped make them more effective family and community members once they became adults.

Results of the **Measures of Success** study were recently released at the Annual General Meeting of the Canadian 4-H Council in Saskatoon. "This report will help guide the 4-H program into the 21st century," says Bob Boulton, Council president. "It is a useful tool for enhancing the program at all levels, recruiting new sponsors, and reminding our many supporters of the program's value to families and communities."

Alumni surveyed represented every province and included those who had been involved in the program in the 1950's thought the 1980's. To examine the benefits of today's program, telephone interviews were conducted with 232 current community and agri-business leaders, 4-H volunteers, families and youth. Overall, they gave the program high marks, supporting the evidence reported by alumni. They also cited the value of open membership, projects that cater to a wide variety of skills and interests, a *Learn To Do By Doing* approach, and family-focused activities.

Alberta 4-H alumni scored very well with respect to the National 4-H results. When asked how much 4-H contributed to the development of their interpersonal and teamwork skills, public speaking, meeting management and self-presentation skills, Alberta alumni exceeded the national average. When compared with national results on offering challenging tasks and experiences, decision making and leadership opportunities, Alberta's 4-H program was a proven leader.

Measures of Success also involved a Canadian 4-H Council review of projects, programs and activities, documenting how well they promote the overall goals of 4-H and certain objectives of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. Insights shared in the workshop sessions were used to develop a set of simple audit and evaluation tools to help provincial personnel and 4-H leaders target desirable objectives.

"The alumni survey and the interviews make it clear that the 4-H program is on track," says Boulton. "But, they also identify some areas that need fine-tuning and re-commitment, which the audit and evaluation tools will help us address as we look to the future."

Each year Alberta's 4-H program involves about 8,755 youth ages nine to 20, particularly in rural areas. More than 2,820 adults serve as volunteer leaders in the 448 clubs. Alberta's 4-H program also recognizes the tremendous support it receives from club, district and regional councils, as well as the many sponsors and friends of 4-H. Together they make *4-H...more than you ever imagined!*

Contact:	*Penny Wilkes*	*Bob Boulton*
	(403) 422-4H4H	*(403) 773-2144*

Peas in the bin means the job's half done

The relatively dry conditions experienced early in the harvesting season in most of the province has helped pea growers harvest crops of moderate to high quality. With some extra marketing effort, Alberta growers could see an improvement to their bottom line as a result.

"There is a feeling among some growers, especially newer ones, that their peas are only good for feed," says Terry Buss, pulse crops specialist, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Vermilion. Varieties are labeled as feed or human consumption but several fall into a dual purpose category that can go either way depending on quality, and peas can vary greatly in terms of quality. In the case of yellow peas, a number of different varieties are acceptable for human consumption. With green peas, most varieties are developed for the human consumption market but some markets and buyers do prefer certain varieties."

There are several possible sales opportunities for field pea production. Some investigation could lead to a significant premium. Aggressive marketing is all about developing a reputation for quality and for consistently providing buyers what they want. Establishing a market relationship with buyers will continue to serve well in the future.

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"If a grower decides to market peas, make sure the sample shown to prospective buyers is representative of what will be sold," says Buss. "The sample is an advertising and bargaining tool. If the quality of the sample is not consistent with the delivered product, a grower's reputation will suffer. It is a good practice to keep part of the original sample carefully stored just in case there is a disagreement."

With field peas, a little investigation can mean significant price gains. As well as applying to human consumption peas, feed pea prices can also vary significantly from day to day. It's worth checking around before selling.

"Developing the ability to grow high quality crops is important. It's also important to develop the business abilities to be able to market those quality crops at a premium," adds Buss.

Contact: Terry Buss
(403)853-8101

Bar None goes off-campus to reach for the STARS

The University of Alberta Agriculture Club is preparing for the 51st annual country and western cabaret, **Bar None**, at the Edmonton Convention Centre, October 17, 1997.

"This isn't just a social," says director Richard Orfino. "Bar None is an important fund-raiser where a portion of the revenue generated is donated to the Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society (STARS)."

Since the Club started donating to STARS in 1993, more than $13,700 has been raised. STARS became the charity of choice because most Aggies are originally from rural Alberta.

"We feel the service STARS provides to our rural communities is invaluable," says Orfino. "Farming is a high risk occupation and STARS can make a big difference in saving lives and limbs."

The Club of about 150 members also engages in a number of activities on the University campus the week prior to the dance. Events include everything from a parade of horses and tractors through the middle of campus to the popular 'farmer sports' which entail activities paralleling typical farm chores.

This year, Bar None is headed off campus and booked in at the Convention Centre in Edmonton. Entertainment is provided by *The Johner Brothers* and *Latigo*. Bar None is a licensed event and tickets, $15 each, are available through Ticketmaster.

"With the continued support of industry and alumni, we're confident that this year's **Bar None** will be a success," adds Orfino. "Bring your dancing boots and join in one of the wildest traditions in Alberta."

Contact: Richard Orfino
(403)492-2932

Agri-News Briefs

Taste of Success '98

The Taste of Success is a provincial program designed to help Alberta food processors with product development and market performance. It is an opportunity to have consumer packaging and marketing evaluations done on new food products. It is open to food processors in Alberta who are producing any type of human food product in an Alberta Public Health certified kitchen. The program can help producers save time and money on product development, provide opportunities to expand business networks and access food industry technical expertise. Program registration packages are available in November and the deadline for applications is January 23, 1998. Details of program workshops will be announced as soon as locations are confirmed. For further information or to request a registration package, contact a rural development specialist - business with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development: Kerry Engel, Westlock, 349-4465; Kathy Lowther, Olds, 556-4220; Sharon Homeniuk, Stony Plain, 963-6101; Morley Kjargaard, St. Paul, 645-6301; Brenda Lea MacPhail, Medicine Hat, 529-3616; Janice McGregor, Morinville, 939-4351; Mary Ellen Norgard, Vulcan, 485-2236; Leona Reynolds-Zayak, Vermilion, 853-8101; Lynn Stegman, Lacombe, 783-3301; or Marian Williams, Camrose, 679-1210.

Feed alternatives

New forages, intercropping and processing by-products represent good feed alternatives for cattle producers. Two forages new to North America could soon be valuable alternatives to conventional crops. Studies show that perennial rye has many advantages over barley as a silage crop and fenugreek is a viable alfalfa alternative. Silage from intercropped barley and annual ryegrass presents another possibility. Research indicates that feeding barley/annual ryegrass silage to growing or finishing steers – with minimum amounts of barley grain – meets nutritional requirement s for optimal performance from the animal. Also, the intercrop yields over 50 per cent more than barley for silage under the same growing conditions. For further information, contact Zahir Mir, ruminant nutritionist, or Surya Acharya, forage breeder, at the Lethbridge Research Centre (403)327-4561.

ARTI results

During its first three years, the Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative (ARTI) sponsored and participated in nearly 200 events that were attended by over 13,000 farmers. Some key extension activities ARTI has sponsored include: 130 direct seeding and reduced tillage workshops, eight provincial direct seeding demonstrations, 11 local direct seeding demonstrations, 41 summer farm tours, 52 reduced tillage fallow cooperators, eight applied research projects, 20 direct seeding factsheets and one direct seeding site. The founding partners for ARTI Phase II are: Alberta Conservation Tillage Society, Agrium, Alberta Pool, DowElanco, Ducks Unlimited, Monsanto, Westco, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration and Olds College. As ARTI moves into phase two of its partnership, the program will expand to include full time agronomists. Over the next three years, ARTI will provide programs, activities and information that accelerate the adoption of reduced tillage and foster the growth and development of the partnership between industry and government. For further information, contact Peter Gamache, ARTI program manager, (403)427-3361.

Private woodlot enterprises

A new Ag-Ventures factsheet is now available on private woodlot enterprises and management. The factsheet shows how private woodlots can be potential business opportunities. The focus of the management overview is on key issues associated with harvesting and marketing logs and timber. It is a resource for Albertans who currently own woodlots and for individuals considering investing in a woodlot. The factsheets covers industry and environmental highlights; regulatory basics; marketing and production basics; and, economic and financial basics. ***Private Woodlot Enterprises*** (Agdex FS300/830-1) is available free of charge through Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district offices or by contacting the Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. For a full listing of publications available through the department, check the Agriculture Internet site at:

http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/agdex/index.html

Use Respect

As part of the long-standing **Use Respect** program, Alberta Environmental Protection and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development are again making **Use Respect** posters available to landholders who wish to regulate access to hunters and other recreationists. The weather resistant, bright orange and green colored posters can be posted on perimeter fences and give the name and phone number of the landholder, requesting that hunters and other recreationists **Use Respect** and ask for access permission. The program is a partnership with Alberta Cattle Commission, Western Stock Growers' Association, the W.I.S.E. Foundation, Alberta Fish & Game Association and the two government departments. Signs can be picked up at all Alberta Environmental Protection Fish and Wildlife offices and at all Agriculture Public Lands Offices. For further information, contact Mike Dorrance at (403)427-4567

Winter wheat field day

If you're contemplating growing winter wheat, the Southern Alberta Soil & Crop Diagnostic Field School has scheduled a field day demonstrating several aspects of winter wheat. The field day is October 15, 1997 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Lethbridge Agriculture Center, one half mile east of 43 Street on Gaol Road. The winter wheat diagnostic plots include trials demonstrating soil fertility and management – fertilizer rate and placement trials for nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, sulphur and boron fertilizers; new winter wheat varieties; weed and herbicide plots showing the effects of seeding rate and fertilizer on weeds; and, winter wheat agronomics – seeding rate, seed quality, seed vigor and seeding depth trials. This is a free event and all are welcome to attend. For more information contact Dr. Ross McKenzie, soil fertility specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, (403)381-5842. To pre-register call (403)381-5126.

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AGRI-NEWS

October 13, 1997

AGC concerned over amendments to the Canadian Wheat Board Act

"Alberta Grain Commission (AGC) members are not impressed with the proposed amendments to the Canadian Wheat Board Act," says Pat Durnin, Commission member from Kathyrn, Alberta. "Bill C-4 is not much different than the previous Bill C-72 which producer groups criticized earlier this year. In fact, it is worse."

Bill C-4 now contains the provision to include commodities such as canola, rye and oats. This provision is directly contrary to presentations made by a number of producers to the Western Grain Marketing Panel. Issues such as continued control by the Federal Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Finance, early closing of pool accounts, establishment of a contingency fund and the ill-conceived rules for removing wheat or barley from Board control were flagged by producers as concerns. It would appear these concerns have been overlooked

As a result, the AGC is encouraging farmers to review and discuss the features of Bill C-4 with their respective commodity organizations. It is important that producers understand what is in store for them through this legislation. It may not be what the federal government says it is.

Gil Balderston, Commission member from Sexsmith adds, "Allowing for the inclusion of additional commodities will introduce a level of uncertainty and could curtail investment and growth for non-Board commodities. The canola industry has evolved from day one based on an open commercial marketplace. Who is going to invest in another canola processing plant if there is the possibility that canola would fall under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Board? The thought of canola being like malt barley is something that I cannot comprehend."

The AGC held a series of meetings around the province in January and February, 1997 on the previously proposed amendment legislation, Bill C-72. Producers attending these meetings expressed their concerns about Bill C-72 feeling it did not provide for adequate accountability to producers

"Clearly the government is not listening," says Ken Motiuk of Mundare. "Primary accountability of the Board will be to the federal government. Elected Board members will have only

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

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limited powers. Any major decisions still have to be approved by the Federal Minister responsible for the Wheat Board, or Cabinet. For example, the Minister sets the rules for any vote by producers to exclude a commodity from the Board or to add a commodity to the Board. The Minister could set a 50 per cent plus one rule to add a commodity and a two-thirds rule to exclude. It appears that the government has maintained the right to determine what is in the best interests of producers."

Contact:	*Pat Durnin*	*Gil Balderston*
	(403) 935-4411	*(403) 568-3309*
	Ken Motiuk	*(403) 764-2629*

Fall seeding canola

Seeding canola late in fall can have some major yield benefits. The practice is still somewhat experimental but, has been successful enough to warrant consideration on a small part of the farm this autumn.

"Fall seeded canola will germinate in the spring and there are several benefits to the timing involved," says Gordon Frank, crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Brooks. "The early crop takes advantage of early moisture and cooler growing conditions, avoiding extreme heat that can blast flowers and shrivel pods, and flowers earlier than spring seeded canola. The maturing crop often misses diseases that reduce yield, beats the major insect populations and is harvested before damage is significant. Also, with early canola there can be a premium cash price, due to a lower basis for canola delivered in August."

Only more time and research will confirm whether the advantages outweigh the disadvantages of occasional poor stands in spring. The advantages of fall seeded canola are less for irrigated area producers. However, researchers are working on ways to make fall seeding an even greater benefit for irrigated producers.

"Pick land that does not flood for long periods of time," says Jay Byer, crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Bonnyville. "Land with a particular slope or stubble or some advantage to hold snow cover is preferred Know the weed population and remember that clean land will minimize weed competition wrecks. A herbicide tolerant variety may add some flexibility in weed control but the cost of seed can add to the risk in case of a crop failure."

Seed placement must be shallow, no more than a half inch deep. The seed starts very slowly in the cold spring soils and won't make it if the seeding depth is too deep. Ensure good seed to soil contact but don't over pack. Direct seeding may be beneficial.

"Fall seed as late as possible," adds Byer. "The soil must be cold and stay that way to ensure seed dormancy. The soil should stay below 5°C at mid-day. In most areas this usually won't occur until the last week of October or the first week of November. Seed as late as you can before freeze-up and any significant amount of snow."

Contact:	*Gordon Frank*	*Jay Byer*
	(403)362-1212	*(403)826-3388*

Winterizing stock waterers

Winter in Alberta is tough enough without having the stock waterer freeze up. To beat the cold, it's time to get existing waterers back into good working order or install a new one.

"If waterers are still up to the job and will ensure reliable service this winter, they should be serviced while the weather is still warm," says Ken Williamson, agricultural engineering technologist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Red Deer.

The Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute (PAMI) monitored several waterers during the winters of 1990 to 1993. They recorded operating costs ranging from $24 to $100/year for the most efficient to the least.

Key steps that should be done when winterizing a stock waterer include:

- check insulation in the base. Many older waterers had very poor insulation. If this is the case, install some new rigid styrofoam insulation. The thermostats in some waterers sense the temperature in the base, not the water temperature. In these waterers, heat loss through the base can be very high;
- check the weather stripping and caulking around the base. A waterer base that allows the wind to blow though will use a lot of electricity. Access doors and panels can be major heat loss points, too;
- check the heat tape. Check the electrical outlet with a trouble light to make sure there is power. Plug the heat tape in and hold a ziplock bag full of ice against the thermostat to see if the tape will turn on;
- check the thermostat on the waterer. The thermostat should be set as low as practical; and
- check the float valve to make sure it is working properly.

"If a waterer is in poor condition or has been causing problems, consider one of the new energy efficient or energy free waterers," says Williamson. "Energy efficient electrically heated waterers use extra insulation, more direct heating of the water and optional floating covers to reduce heat loss."

Many of the energy free waterers have also proven successful in cold prairie conditions. These waterers work like a thermos bottle and rely on retaining the heat in the water by using lots of insulation, floating covers and ground heat. For energy free waterers to work, several critical conditions must be met:

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- proper design, some are designed for milder winters;
- proper insulation is critical;
- proper maintenance, cattle are sloppy drinkers so the ice build-up around the drinker lids must be chipped away daily during cold weather;
- proper adjustment, water level is important in keeping the drinker covers in place;
- proper sizing, too few animals will result in not enough use and freeze up, and
- must be used daily.

"If replacing an old electrical unit with an energy free unit on the old base, it's best to install a heat tape on the water supply line," adds Williamson. "The small riser pipe that is usually used with electric waterers will freeze off."

For additional information or a PAMI research update, **Energy Free Water Fountains**, available at all Agriculture district offices.

Contact: *Ken Williamson*
(403)340-5324

Fall-applied nitrogen fertilizer

Fall fertilization can range from very effective to disastrous depending on soil moisture, the form of nitrogen used and how it is applied.

"There are some general rules for application methods and timing," says Ross McKenzie, soil fertility specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Fertilizer N is applied to soil in the form of urea ($CO(NH_2)_2$), anhydrous ammonia (NH_3), ammonium (NH_4) and nitrate (NO_3) forms, depending on the product. Urea and NH_3 quickly convert to ammonium. It's the NH_4 and NO_3 that are taken up by plants. If the soil is warm, moist and well aerated, ammonium is rapidly oxidized to nitrate through the nitrification process performed by highly specialized soil bacteria."

Banding slows the nitrification process by creating an environment near the band that inhibits the activity of the bacteria. Generally, spring banded is the most effective method of application and fall broadcast the least. However, fall banded nitrogen can be as effective as spring banded, if there is no extended period of saturated soil conditions in the spring. Fall banded may be more effective than spring banded if a lack of seedbed moisture is a concern.

"Twenty years of research in Alberta shows that if fall-applied N is converted to nitrate prior to freeze-up, large losses can occur when soils are water saturated during and just after snow melt in early spring," says McKenzie. "The risk of over-winter nitrogen loss is highest in regions with moister climates, such as west central Alberta. There is less risk in regions that tend to be drier, like south eastern Alberta. Even in these regions, nitrogen losses can be high during a wet spring."

Nitrogen losses through denitrification, a process that converts nitrate to nitrogen and oxygen gases, in drier regions are usually small and fall banded N is equal to spring banded N.

Where spring banding causes significant loss of seedbed moisture, fall banding can be superior. With this in mind, before fertilizing this fall consider these agronomic factors:

- if soils tend to be saturated with water for extended periods in the spring, fall fertilizer application is probably not a good option;
- soil test to determine the optimum rates of fertilizer required;
- apply a conservative rate of nitrogen fertilizer. An application of 75 per cent of soil test recommendation is a hedge against both high soil test N levels, poor spring soil moisture or low crop prices;
- select a fertilizer formulation that is right for your conditions;
- avoid the use of the nitrate containing products such as 34-0-0 and 28-0-0 on soils that tend to be saturated in the spring;
- apply N in late fall after the soil temperature has dropped below 7° C and the nitrification process has slowed down; and
- band, don't broadcast.

"In summary, fall fertilization can improve time management and allow earlier planting," adds McKenzie. "Producers often find that fertilizer prices and payment schedules are more favourable and the availability of product is often better in the fall. Drier soil conditions in the fall can also mean that application equipment is less likely to cause soil compaction."

No soil type or region of the province is 100 per cent safe when it comes to losses of fall applied N. To make an informed decision whether or not to fertilize this fall, producers can discuss their specific situation with their fertilizer dealer, fertilizer industry agronomist and their nearest Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development crop specialist.

Contact: *Ross McKenzie*
(403)381-5126

Hort Congress

The 10th anniversary of the Alberta Horticultural Congress is being held in Edmonton, November 6 to 8, 1997 at the Mayfield Inn and Trade Centre.

"The conference and trade show have so much to offer serious, professional growers," says Shirley Alton, horticulture coordinator with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton. "Last year, approximately 500 professional growers attended the sessions and, with even more to offer this year, we expect an excellent turn out again."

The Congress conference and trade show, open to industry only, offers professional growers the opportunity to attend 50 conference seminars. Brian Smith, 1996 Grower of the Year U.K., is one of the keynote speakers. Smith has traveled extensively in Europe, Australia, New Zealand and North America, studying the growing and marketing of plants.

"I started Woodlea Nurseries in 1969 and since then it has grown into a medium size nursery with about 80,000 square feet of glass and plastic," says Smith. "As a hands-on grower myself, I really do believe I understand the problems growers can face. I've always had an interest in marketing and I feel that in the future growers everywhere are going to be marketing to even more demanding consumers."

The Congress is an opportunity to hear from others in the field, consider some of the new ideas being presented and meet and talk to other growers. Congress registration is $170. Early registration, before October 16, is only $96. For further information, contact Shirley Alton at (403)422-1789 or fax (403)417-0862.

Contact: *Shirley Alton*
(403)422-1789

Horticultural trade show – a sell-out

The Prairie West Horticultural Trade Show has sold out. The trade show, open only to industry, is the largest of its kind on the prairies and attracts many sectors: greenhouses, landscapers, nurseries, garden centres, sod producers, fruit growers, flower growers and other horticulture business groups.

"We've increased the show by adding another 20 booths, bringing the total booth space to 224," said Nigel Bowles, trade show manager. "Despite the increase in space, the show has sold out a week ahead of previous years. It's very exciting for everyone involved."

Exhibitors from as far away as Texas will display their products and services at this industry-only trade show. More than 1,300 business owners from across the three prairie provinces are expected to attend the show.

The trade show, is sponsored by the Alberta Horticultural Congress and Landscape Alberta Nursery Trades Association (LANTA). Being held in Edmonton at the Mayfield Inn and Trade Centre on November 6 to 7, marks the fifth year for the joint show.

Further information is available by contacting Sue Grimm, trade show administrator, (403)489-1991,
fax: (403)444-2152; toll free: 1-800-378-3198 or
e-mail: lanta@planet.eon.net

Contact: *Sue Grimm*
(403)489-1991

If it ain't Alberta, it ain't beef

What has 140 heads, 560 legs and two wings? Read on and find out.

It was a pleasant afternoon in the province of Yunnan in southwest China, a region near the Burma/Vietnam border. But this was no ordinary day for the people who live there. Hundreds gathered at their tiny airport to witness the first landing of a jumbo jet. To most Albertans, it would be like watching the space shuttle land at the local airport. For the flight crew, the twenty hour trip was almost over, but the excitement had just begun.

"It was a first," says Ted Mitenko of Alta Genetics Inc., the company contracted to organize the shipment of 140 Alberta cattle, "A plane of this size, carrying a live cargo, landing where it was - no one knew for sure what was going to happen."

From the delivery of a special loading and unloading ramp from England, to the refueling of the plane in Anchorage then again in Tokyo, months of planning by Mitenko and his staff were about to pay off, or were they? "I remember being up on the flight deck, looking over the captain's shoulder as the wheels of the 747 touched down. You could see the end of the runway up ahead, you could hear the brakes screaming and I was thinking to myself -we're not going to stop!"

But they did, and all 140 cattle, along with a few extras born along the way, made the trip safely. That was in February of 1996.

A year and a half later, and about 1500 kilometres north, another shipment of Alberta cattle was nearing completion. It was July, 1997 and this time over 1,200 cattle arrived by boat, docking on the coast of China. "That's when things started to get interesting," recalls Bob Prather of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The final destination was Inner Mongolia. Considering the distance yet to travel by land, the terrain that lay ahead, along with the fact there are no cattle liners, just trucks that might carry eight cattle at a time - it took a monumental effort."

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Another effort currently underway is the 1997 Asian Mission Joined by Premier Ralph Klein, Agriculture Minister Ed Stelmach will sign the Alberta-China Beef Technical Agreement this week. The agreement will open the doors for increased technical support services to Alberta/China businesses and projects.

The delivery of Alberta cattle to Yunnan was a precedent-setter, as was the delivery to Mongolia. While not the first shipments of Alberta cattle to China, they were unique and were important steps to further developing a solid beef relationship with China. The Asian Mission is another important step in Alberta cattle and beef becoming the products of choice in China. Alberta is earning its market share by demonstrating the quality, value, service, consistency, image and commitment that we so often take for granted. When working outside Alberta, strong personal and business relationships produce beef sales and that's part of what this Asian Mission is all about

If it ain't Alberta, it ain't beef is a phrase that's beginning to be believed in China.

Contacts:	*Bob Prather*	*Ted Mitenko*
	(403)422-7213	*239-8882*
	Barrie Harrison	*422-7678*

Funding support for northeast shared-use processing plant

A shared-use food processing facility for northeast Alberta received provincial and federal financing support. The proposed facility, a pilot project for the development of a viable food processing industry in rural Canada, will contribute to regional economic growth and value-added agricultural exports.

"This is a first step in the development of a food processing industry based on many small businesses, created by local residents establishing a stable and long lasting business and community environment," says Sylvia Hoberg, secretary of the Food Processors' Federation of Northeast Alberta

Planned as a federally inspected food-processing centre, the facility will allow emerging entrepreneurs access to the Canada and world-wide market for processed food products without the need for large individual capital investment.

"The facility will be equipped with coolers, freezers, packaging machinery and other specialized food processing equipment in a building designed to segregate meat and similar products from fruit and vegetable processing areas," says Hoberg. "It will be operated on a 'shared-use' basis designed to accommodate the needs of small and emerging processors. In addition facility services are expected to include package design and marketing assistance.

"It's all finally coming together," adds Hoberg, a Bellis area U-pick operator, who produces gourmet cheese cakes in a local community hall for sale to restaurants within the region "It's the result of recent economic and community development initiatives of the Northern Alberta Development Council in cooperation with local governments; Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development; Alberta Economic Development; Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; and, the Community Futures organizations in Northeast Alberta.

"Financing from public and private sectors is expected to be in place in late October or early November and a decision on the site for the $1.2 million facility will be made at that time," says Linda Christensen, treasurer for the Food Processors' Federation of Northeast Alberta and operator of a successful market garden south of the Town of Smoky Lake. "The organization's immediate task is to evaluate potential sites in the northeast. We are interested in a final look at any suitable sites in the region that may have been overlooked in our earlier research."

Any community or individual with access to a potentially suitable site is invited to submit details of their proposed site to the Federation by October 15, 1997. Basic specifications for the site can be obtained by phoning the St. Paul/Smoky Lake BCDC (403)656-2110. Proposals should be mailed to the Food Processors Federation of Northeast Alberta, c/o Box 310, Smoky Lake, AB T0A 3C0

Contact:	*George Rife*	*Kathleen Ozmun*
	(403)656-2110	*(403)656-3613*

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Agriculture Internet site worth exploring

The Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture (ESA) site on Ropin' the Web is a good place for finding out what's happening with sustainable agriculture in Alberta. Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's ESA web pages cover a variety of topics including: soil and land resources; biodiversity; and, environmental legislation. The *Alberta Conservation Connection* and *Seeding On the Edge* are two newsletters that can be accessed on-line. This site is also lists other interesting sustainable agriculture Internet sites. Check it out at **http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/sustain**

Saskatchewan beef symposium

A two-day symposium focusing on current topics of interest to beef producers and beef research at the University of Saskatchewan is being held at the Travelodge Hotel, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan on November 18 and 19, 1997. Research updates on: feeding canola screenings; agronomics and feeding of salt-tolerant grasses, native and tame pastures; current herd health problems; winter feeding programs; controlling carcass quality from field to freezer are being featured. A discussion on retained ownership is as part of the information filled two days. A bus tour of the U of S Beef Cattle Research Station and the Saskatoon Fall Fair & Mexabition round out the agenda. The symposium is sponsored by the U of S (Animal & Poultry Science, Extension Division, Western Beef Development Centre, Western College of Veterinary Medicine); Saskatchewan Agriculture & Food; the Reinhold Termuende Trust; the Saskatchewan Cattle Feeders Association; and the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association. For more information, contact John McKinnon (306)966-4137 or Grant Wood (306)966-5586.

Competitive intelligence

Dr. Jonathan Calof, associate professor of international business at the University of Ottawa is conducting an information session on competitive intelligence on October 20, 1997 in Airdrie. The session is designed to help participants integrate information already existing in their organization and understand why the competition is doing what it's doing. Understanding the role of competitive intelligence – how it aids decision making, strategic planning and business development and creating a competitive intelligence culture are also topics being covered. Calof presents seminars around the world on decision making and competitive intelligence and has been honored by the Society of Competitive Intelligence Professionals. This session is presented by Alberta Economic Development in cooperation with the City of Airdrie Corporate & Business Development, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Airdrie Chamber of Commerce, Alberta Vocational College and Business Development Centre West. For further information, contact Kathy Lowther (403)556-4264, Olds. A similar seminar is being held in Lethbridge on October 21. Contact Jeff Motherwell (403)381-5414 for information on the Lethbridge seminar.

New crop specialist in Oyen

Trevor Wallace, crop specialist - cereals and oilseeds, joined the Oyen office of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development on September 1, 1997. Wallace, born and raised on a 3,600 acre mixed farm in Unity, Saskatchewan, comes to the department with degrees from the University of Saskatchewan including a BSc in biology, BSA in agriculture - crop science and MSc in Agriculture - working with field beans. "I worked for the Department of Crop Science and Plant Ecology, U of S, on bread wheat," says Wallace. "This was primarily small plot research aimed at developing and screening new varieties of bread wheat. For two seasons I was a cereal consultant on P.E.I. where we worked with producers to improve management practices, specifically on cereals."

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Cap removed from wildlife compensation

In response to producers' concerns, the maximum value per acre payment cap from the wildlife compensation program is being removed to bring it in line with the waterfowl compensation program. The announcement was made on October 9, 1997 by the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Ed Stelmach.

While waterfowl compensation is funded jointly by provincial and federal governments, the wildlife compensation program is a provincial responsibility. "Unfortunately, wildlife such as deer, elk and moose don't respect subtle program differences, and eat the crops with the same enthusiasm as waterfowl," says Stelmach. "The payment cap to wildlife compensation meant that farmers could receive less for wildlife damage than for waterfowl damage, even if that damage resulted in the same amount of crop loss."

"Removing the payment cap will increase the total annual payments to farmers by approximately $100,000 per year on average, based on experience in the program from 1990 to 1995," says Rick McConnell, the vice president of research, information and development for the Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC). "That amount will vary, and, as we know, 1996 was anything but a normal year. In fact, it was the worst year on record for wildlife damage to crops. More than $4.3 million was paid out to farmers in 1996 – 15 times higher than the average."

The additional funds will be re-allocated from existing budgets. Waterfowl and wildlife crop damage compensation programs help support the preservation and development of wildlife habitat for all Albertans. Much of the habitat is located on private lands, and farmers who lose crop income because of wildlife should be compensated.

The wildlife crop damage compensation program was included as part of an ongoing examination of the crop insurance program because of unusually high losses caused by wildlife in 1996. Farmers identified several areas for change in crop insurance coverage to be made for the 1998 crop year.

However, because wildlife losses traditionally happen in the fall, the Ministry has moved quickly to change regulations removing the payment cap for the 1997 crop year.

"AFSC assesses the changing needs of our customers and responds to those needs given the limited budgets facing government," adds McConnell. "This important change to the wildlife compensation program, and those for the 1998 crop insurance program, will answer many concerns expressed by farmers."

Contact: *Rick McConnell* *Rod Rains*
(403) 782-8219 *(403) 782-8240*

This Week

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

Alberta and China cooperating to develop Chinese beef industry

The Alberta and Chinese governments will provide technical support services to joint Alberta-China commercial livestock projects under the terms of an agreement signed by Premier Ralph Klein and Agriculture Minister Ed Stelmach in Beijing as part of the October 7-21 trade and investment mission to Asia.

The beef technical agreement will assist the Chinese in expanding their commercial livestock industry and provide Alberta companies and beef products easier access to the Chinese market.

China is expanding beef production, forecast to increase 150 per cent from 1995 levels of four million tonnes to 10 million tonnes by 2000, and requires investment of more than $1 billion Cdn. The agreement will help Alberta's agri-businesses take advantage of this new investment opportunity.

In his remarks to Chinese representatives at the signing, Klein highlighted the importance of the long-standing relationship between Alberta and China. "The agreement that is being signed here is another welcome advance in our learning from each other and in building on our partnerships in agriculture and the beef industry."

"The building of new markets for Alberta beef and cooperation between our governments to encourage and facilitate the development of the Chinese commercial livestock industry are critically important," adds Stelmach. "The agreement builds on that cooperation by providing technical support services to China/Alberta businesses and projects."

This agreement builds on a memorandum of cooperation signed between the Chinese and Alberta governments in July, 1996. That memorandum established a direct cooperative relationship between Alberta Agriculture and the Ministry of Agriculture of the People's Republic of China. The new agreement develops the relationship further by creating easier access to the Chinese market for Alberta companies and Alberta beef products as well as establishing long-term commercial relations

"This document strengthens Alberta's commitment to assist in the development of China's beef industry through training, the use of technology and shipments of live cattle and embryos," says Klein.

The agreement highlights the importance of research, technology and training as keys to the future success of China's beef industry. The Ministry of Agriculture of the People's Republic of China and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development of Alberta have indicated their intent to "fully cooperate in the provision of technical support services to commercial undertakings and projects involving Alberta companies and their China partners."

"Alberta has an international reputation for high-quality beef products that is second to none," adds Stelmach. "China's economy is growing at nearly 10 per cent per year. This level of growth presents a prime opportunity for Alberta companies to significantly expand their business with China over the next 10 years."

The Premier is leading a delegation of cabinet ministers, mayors, education officials and representatives from more than 70 Alberta companies on a trade and investment mission to Asia. Mr. Stelmach is also on a trade mission to Asia, leading a group of Alberta agri-businesses to further the Alberta Advantage in Agriculture. The Minister is joining Premier Klein at key points during the Premier's mission.

Contact:	*Jim Dau*	*John Cotton*
	(403) 422-4907	*(403) 422-2789*

National 4-H Week – celebrating Alberta youth

4-H ... it's more than you ever imagined! November 3rd through 9th is the time to celebrate how far 4-H reaches and contributes in communities across Canada. Alberta's 4-H program boasts over 8,755 members, 2820 adult volunteer leaders, as well as many sponsors and friends of 4-H.

"This has been an exciting year for Alberta's 4-H program," says Mahlon Weir, head of the 4-H branch, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD). "1997 celebrates the 80th Anniversary of 4-H in Alberta. Since that first junior swine club formed in Olds in 1917, we continue to be recognized as a dynamic program preparing Alberta's youth for leadership roles in their communities and Alberta's agriculture and food industry."

This past spring, 4-H members from Daysland were involved in a little movie-making as 4-H produced a music video. An original soundtrack was recorded and local 4-H'ers were filmed in and around Daysland. The video has already been broadcast across the province and is used in promotional activities.

In June, the Silver Award was presented to the 4-H Partners Team at the annual Premier's Award of Excellence Ceremonies in Edmonton. "The 4-H Branch was able to survive a 30 per cent budget reduction without compromises in program quality because our partners made it happen," comments Weir. The 4-H Partners Team is made up of the 4-H staff from AAFRD, members of the Alberta 4-H Council and the 4-H Foundation of Alberta.

The new Provincial 4-H Congress in Olds, a three-day summer extravaganza, included the Provincial 4-H Horse Classic and Project Fair. 4-H members and leaders from around the province had a wonderful opportunity to share and learn together.

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In August, 4-H members, past and present, gathered to celebrate the 80th Anniversary and the 20th year of the Alberta 4-H Centre at Battle Lake, near Westerose. Dr. Grant MacEwan, former owner of the property now home to the Centre, sent his greetings. MacEwan's letter read, "I hope from my tired, old heart, that Battle Lake will continue to inspire and serve 4-H in Alberta for the next 100 years or better still, for the next 1,000 years." In addition to being the site of many 4-H programs, the 4-H Foundation of Alberta hosts schools, corporate, senior and family groups at the Alberta 4-H Centre There they participate in an environmental appreciation program.

In response to many requests, a new two volume 4-H cookbook was launched. ***Focus on 4-H Favorites*** retails for $26 and contains over 1800 recipes for appetizers, main courses, breads and deserts. The cookbook set can be purchased from local 4-H'ers.

The Provincial 4-H Scholarship program awarded 83 scholarships totaling more than $50,000. Alberta 4-H scholarships, funded through the private sector, recognize 4-H members with outstanding 4-H participation and community contributions as well as strong communication, leadership and interpersonal skills.

"4-H'ers are recognized for their public speaking abilities," says Mahlon Weir. "Our communications program has grown with technology. Many 4-H clubs have websites and there are 4-H project discussion groups on the AAFRD web site," adds Weir

From cows and cooking to entrepreneurs and Internet, Alberta's 4-Hers are proud to celebrate 80 years as a premiere youth organization – *Be seen in green and white!!*

To join 4-H call (403) 422-4H4H or visit their website at: **http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/ruraldev/4h**

Contact: Carol Sullivan
(403)422-4H4H

FBMP winter program guide

The Canada-Alberta Farm Business Management Program (FBMP) is ready to launch the winter program of activities guide.

"Farmers and ranchers throughout the province should look for our new program guide in their mail during the third week of October," says Nan Bartlett, FBMP program representative. "The guide lists all the upcoming training activities funded by FBMP."

The theme of the program guide is Directing Change. "We believe that farm managers want to take control of the changes happening in the industry," says Bartlett. "Increasing their knowledge and skills in farm management can help them do that."

The way farmers and ranchers can learn has changed. The guide lists a wide variety of training methods, from classrooms to clubs to the Internet. Distance delivery of programs adds a lot of flexibility to the way farm managers can learn

"You no longer have to attend a course when and where the instructor is available to present it," adds Bartlett. "A program that is offered on the Internet or as a package of written materials, for example is available wherever your busy farming schedule allows."

Farmers don't need to lose the social aspect of learning, either Most programs are designed to allow interaction between participants even though they may not meet face-to-face Learning from other participants is often as important as what the instructor has to say.

More information about the FBMP or upcoming programs is available from FBMP representatives: Craig Smith – southern and central regions (403) 626-3448 or fax (403) 626-3461; Arla Trueblood – northwest and northeast regions, phone/fax (403) 954-3745; or Nan Bartlett – Peace region (403) 835-4288 or fax (403) 835-2899.

Contact: Nan Bartlett
(403)835-4288

Alberta celebrates milestone

Fifty years ago, the Alberta Wheat Pool first honored 4-H members selected to attend the National 4-H Club Conference Today, the Alberta Pool continues with its tradition, and honours both 4-H leaders and members selected to attend the National 4-H Conferences held in Toronto

"Each year for the past 50 years, the Alberta Pool has invited 4-H delegates, their parents and club leaders to a special recognition banquet prior to their departure for the National 4-H Conference," says Marguerite Stark, provincial 4-H program specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development

This year, **Kimberly Penosky**, Botha; **Richard Grant**, Bowden; **Leanne Holt**, Redwater; **Linda Armitage**, Red Deer, **Jennifer Hadley**, Westlock, and **Kirsten Anderson**, Etzikom were selected to attend the National 4-H Conference. 4-H Leaders **Dwayne Grover**, Stettler; **Margaret Davis**, Rocky Mountain House; **Elaine Lyster**, Vilna; **Doug Wray**, Irricana; **Wendy Meunier**, Barrhead; and **Denise Vos**, Burdett, were selected to attend the National 4-H Volunteer Leaders Conference.

"Both national conferences take place in Toronto November 5-9 and allow the 4-H participants the opportunity to share information and gain an appreciation of the 4-H program across Canada," adds Stark. "Participants will be able to work with members and leaders from across Canada and the United

Cont'd on page 4

States in issue groups. They will share opinions and ideas, take part in conference sessions and have the opportunity to visit points of interest such as the CN Tower, Skydome, and the Royal Winter Fair."

The Alberta Pool, by honoring the delegates prior to their departure, recognizes the value of participating in a national 4-H program, and also recognizes the efforts put forth by leaders and parents. The Alberta 4-H Program salutes the Alberta Pool in achieving another milestone of support to Alberta 4-H, and congratulates all award recipients attending these two special conferences during National 4-H Week.

Contact: Marguerite Stark
(403) 948-8510

September harvest weather warm

The provincial average temperature was 2.2 degrees above normal and the provincial average precipitation was near normal for September in Alberta providing good harvest weather for most Alberta farmers.

"The first widespread frost occurred between September 17 and 19," says Dzikowski. "That's about one week later than the average first fall frost date for most Alberta agricultural regions. Temperatures dropped to between 0 and -4.3 degrees The frost was followed by warm, dry weather until the end of the month, providing ideal harvest weather."

The provincial average temperature was 2.2 degrees above the 1961 to 1990 average of 10.4 degrees. Most Alberta locations reported monthly average temperatures ranging from two to four degrees above normal. The averages are based on data recorded at 59 Environment Canada climate stations across the province.

"September is usually the fifth wettest month of the year," says Peter Dzikowski, agri-weather resource specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Provincial average precipitation of 46.4 mm was 2.0 mm above the 1961 to 1990 average 44.4 mm."

The southern region was the driest, reporting less than half of normal September precipitation. The central, northeast and northwest regions reported near normal precipitation and the Peace region reported almost double the average precipitation. Amounts of 6.6 to 141.5 mm, or 18 to 351 per cent of normal were reported in Alberta.

Red Earth recorded the greatest precipitation departure, receiving 141.5 mm of precipitation or 351 per cent of normal. Bow Island reported the greatest temperature departure, 3.9 degrees above the monthly average of 12.9 degrees for September

Contact: Peter Dzikowski
(403)427-3594

Agri-News Briefs

Yellow Ribbon Program

The objective of the **Yellow Ribbon Program** is to save lives Suicide happens when pain exceeds the resources for coping with it. Being aware of the program and, knowing the signs to look for can help save lives. The **Yellow Ribbon Program** is a community based prevention program that increases positive coping strategies, improves stress management, increases awareness of resources and increases positive relationships The Town of St. Paul Family and Community Support Services is sponsoring **Yellow Ribbon Program** presentations in St. Paul on:

- October 27 – 12:00 noon at the St. Paul Chamber of Commerce;
  1:45 to 2:45 p.m. at the Glen Avon School;
- October 28 – 12:00 noon at St. Therese Health Centre;
  2:00 to 3:00 at St. Paul Regional High School;
  7:00 p.m. at the Regional School Open House;
- October 31 – 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. at the Two Hills High School

On October 29, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., a session on *What Do You Say After A Suicide* will be presented at the Bonnyville Canadian Native Friendship Centre. For further information, contact Cheryl Snider (403)645-5311

Stock growers convention and trade fair

The 102nd Annual Western Stock Growers' Association (WSGA) convention, trade fair and cowboy craft fair is planned for November 18 to 20 at the Coast Plaza in Calgary. All are welcome and you don't have to be a member of the WSGA to attend. The agenda covers a wide range of topics from free market environmentalism, a health environment to low cost cow-calf production and ranching around the world. Guest speakers include: Terry Anderson, founder of the political economy research centre; Wayne Burleson, a certified land management consultant; Dick Diven, owner of Agri-Concepts Inc.; Laura Jones, an environment economist at the Fraser Institute; and, Bruce Vincent, president of Communities for a Great Northwest. Registration fee is $150 – single; $225 – double; $50 – student; and $75 – daily fee. Extra banquet tickets are $35. Fees listed do not include GST. For further information or to register, contact WSGA at (403)250-9121, fax (403)250-9122.

Agritrade '97

Surf the greatest Internet sites in the world by just stopping at the Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development exhibit at Agritrade '97. Check out Ropin' the Web for the latest information – weather reports, agriculture publications, crops page, livestock, 4-H and much more. Go surfin' solo or with an Agriculture staff member at one of the two computer on-line kiosks. From aggie sites to agri-businesses to doing a net search for agriculture information and contacts, you can access it all. If you have an address you'd like to take a look at, bring it in and staff will help you find it. Ropin' the Web scavenger hunt at Agritrade rewards those who take a few minutes to visit our site to find out more about district offices and information on the site. The first 25 scavengers each day will receive a free Ropin' the Web mug. Agritrade is held at the Westerner Exhibition, Red Deer on November 12 to 15, 1997 Copies of a list of popular agriculture sites around the world can be picked up at the exhibit. For further information, contact Laura Lee Billings at (403)854-5500.

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ARTI Phase II

The Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative (ARTI) enters a new three year mandate with additional resources and a program focusing on reduced tillage. ARTI's mission is to reduce the amount and intensity of tillage in Alberta. ARTI is committed to providing people, programs, activities and information that accelerate the adoption of reduced tillage.

"ARTI Phase II, as we are calling it, will have a different look than the original," says Peter Gamache, ARTI program manager. "Additional funding has enabled us to hire full time agronomists. We have hired three to date and if funding permits will hire an additional three."

Eric Oosterhuis is located in the Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD) office in Stettler and can be reached at (403)742-7546. His area includes the Counties of Stettler, Paintearth, SA 2, 3 and 4 and Acadia Valley. Oosterhuis is a graduate of the U of A with a BSc in agriculture. He has worked with the conservation and development branch for seven years doing research on soil conservation projects including direct seeding.

Jeff Prochnau is located in the Sedgewick office of AAFRD in the Flagstaff County building. Jeff can be reached at (403)384-3737. His area includes most of the northeast region. Prochnau grew up on a grain farm in the Fort Saskatchewan area and graduated with a BSc in agriculture engineering from the U of A. He spent seven years with the conservation and development branch doing research on soil conservation. For the last four years, he focused on direct seeding annual crops into pasture sod.

Mark Olson will be starting in the northwest region in November at the AAFRD Leduc office. He can be reached at (403)986-8985. Olson has a BSc in Agriculture and a Masters of Agriculture from the U of A. He has worked with AAFRD as a district agriculturalist, regional specialist and pulse crop specialist since 1986. He has been the pulse and special crop specialist in Olds for the last four years.

"The agronomists will focus on reducing tillage in fall and spring annual crop systems, summer fallow and forages," says Gamache. "Some of their extension activities will include work with individual farmers, workshops, demonstrations and trials, written information and applied research. Give them a call with your questions."

With the addition of full time agronomists and the resources of its partners in industry, government and producer organizations, ARTI is aiming to increase the rate of adoption of reduced tillage. About 46 per cent of Alberta's annually seeded acres were direct seeded in 1997.

Contact: Peter Gamache (403)427-3361

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Alberta

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

4-H scholarships awarded

Approximately **$50,000** was awarded to outstanding Alberta 4-H members furthering their post secondary education this fall. Numerous corporate and private sponsors contributed to the 1997 Alberta Provincial 4-H Scholarship Program which is assisting 81 4-H'ers to achieve their academic goals and personal dreams.

Kyla Makowecki, 4-H scholarship coordinator, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development explains, "More than 220 applications were submitted to the provincial 4-H office. The applicants represent a diversity of 4-H projects, backgrounds and educational fields."

To demonstrate why they deserve a scholarship, each applicant completes a *Written Interview* showing their highest achievements in 4-H, school and community. Scholarship applications are marked on 4-H participation, school and community involvement, communication and leadership skills, and academic achievement. They are then sorted based on specific criteria set out by the sponsors.

Contact:	*Kyla Makowecki*	*Carol Sullivan*
	(403) 422-4H4H	*(403) 422-4H4H*

Congratulations to the following 1997 Alberta 4-H Scholarship recipients:

Norma Jean Gray Scholarship – *$1,250 each*
Karalee Aaserud - Craigmyle
Candace Boyne - Wembley
Alison Fehlauer - Leduc
Kristi Stelter - Bindloss
Russell Wildeman - Clive
Timothy Wray - Irricana
Tracey Yackimec - Beauvallon

Alberta Ford and Mercury Dealer Scholarship – *$1,000*
Jason Boorse - St. Paul
Alison Collins - Okotoks
Courtnay King - Manning
Wade Meunier - Edmonton
Jill Russell - Drumheller
Tammy Stokes - Lomond
Elizabeth Webb - Donalda

Alberta Treasury Branches Scholarship – *$1,000*
Kaye Andrews - Nanton
Kristine Ewing - Carbon
Ryan Halun - Radway
Patricia Kozack - Round Hill
Christine Malcolm - Airdrie
Lacey Moses - Vermilion
Dawn Quick - Fort Vermilion

Cooperators Scholarship – *$1,000*
Candace MacGougan - Coronation

The Canadian Wheat Board Scholarship – *$1,000*
Holly Johanson - Westerose

United Farmers of Alberta Scholarship – *$1,000*
Geoffrey Bishop - Langdon
Tanya Froh - Debolt

Lilydale Poultry Scholarship – *$800*
Shelly Marshman - Rockyford

Shirley Story (Trimble) Memorial Scholarship – *$600*
Nicole DesRochers - Ardrossan

Robert Sherwood Memorial Scholarship – *$550*
Lars Ormberg - Rimbey

AgrEvo Canada Inc. Bursary – *$500*
Kelli-Lynn Claypool - Fort Macleod

Alberta Cattle Commission Scholarship – *$500*
Curtis Perry - Coronation
Karen Tulloch - Lacombe

Alberta Dairy Association Scholarship – *$500*
Maureen Trautman - New Norway

Alberta Pool (2nd Year) Scholarship – *$500*
Linsey Chalack - Innisfail
Carrie Cholak - Lamont

Alberta Pool (1st Year) Scholarship – *$500*
Jennifer Hadley - Westlock
Kelly Tulloch - Lacombe

Alberta Salers Association Scholarship – *$500*
Ken Miller - Balzac

Dairyworld Foods Scholarship – *$500*
Jodi Brower - Wainwright

Dana Misick Memorial Scholarship – *$500*
Janice Feenstra - Vermilion

Don Matthews Scholarship – *$500*
Amy Wisniewski - Hairy Hill

Harvest Trust Scholarship – *$500*
Lisa Gruber - Tomahawk

Minburn Wild Rose Scholarship – *$500*
Shelly Menzak - Ranfurly

Pennington Memorial Scholarship – *$500*
Lee Barton - Barrhead

Wetaskiwin District 4-H Scholarship – *$500*
Andrea Dear - Wetaskiwin
Blaine Stone - Westerose
Nicol Stone - Wetaskiwin

Edith Taylor Memorial Scholarship – *$450*
Karla Huber - Sunset House

Cont'd on page 3

George Pimm Memorial Scholarship – *$400*
Cecile Cormier - Grimshaw

Ken Edgerton Memorial Scholarship – *$400*
Sheila Ikram - Fairview

Marilyn Sue Lloyd Memorial Scholarship – *$400*
Jessica Belair - Fort Saskatchewan

Wheat Board Surplus Monies Trust – *$400*
Edward Adkins - Okotoks
Randy Andrashewski - Willingdon
Tara Halun - Radway
Janice Harper - Provost
Candice Hueppelsheuser - Blackfalds
Nyla Kristensen - Dixonville
Dalyce Russill - Elkwater

4-H Foundation of Alberta Scholarship – *$350*
Lisa Mandrusiak - Two Hills

Dixon Shield Memorial Scholarship – *$325*
Mary-Ann Andrews - Barrhead

Glen Bodell Memorial Scholarship – *$325*
Aimee DesRochers - Ardrossan

Blue Klein Memorial Scholarship – *$300*
Erin Krause - New Norway

Calgary 4-H Alumni Scholarship – *$300*
Jennifer DeVries - Vermilion

Cindy Gray Memorial Scholarship – *$300*
Jody Lynn Glover - Wainwright

Farm Credit Corporation Regional Scholarship – *$300*
Heidi Bilben - Balzac
Kelly Butler - New Norway
Lisa Friedenberg - Edmonton
Rachel Gray - Big Stone
Stacie Johnson - Stettler
Diane Ringle - Debolt
Jenny-Lynn Thomson - Wainwright

Inga Marr Memorial Scholarship – *$300*
Tawnya Copland - Tees

Irene M. Leavitt Memorial Scholarship – *$300*
Angela Brightwell - Grimshaw

Ralph Cossey Memorial Scholarship – *$300*
Jeannette Mandrusiak - Two Hills

Rod Andrews Memorial Scholarship – *$300*
Lenore Andrews - Barrhead

Shirley C. Spence Memorial Scholarship – *$300*
Trisha Burger - Stony Plain

Thomas Caryk Memorial Scholarship – *$300*
Charlene Brightwell - Grimshaw

Walter Lipkewich Memorial Scholarship – *$300*
Becky Seck - Innisfree

Woodgrove Unifarm Local Scholarship – *$300*
Ellen Belanger - Morinville

Vermilion River 4-H District Scholarship – *$200*
Melissa Kachan - Vermilion

A & E Cappelle LN Herefords Scholarship – *$175*
Chad Meunier - Barrhead

4-H homemaking leaders workshop

4-H homemaking leaders from across Alberta gathered at the Alberta 4-H Centre at Battle Lake, October 24 through 26, where they got the word on "what's new" for 4-H homemaking members this fall

"Thanks to the sponsorship of **Alberta Agriculture, Food, and Rural Development** (AAFRD), this workshop has become an excellent resource to the volunteers that work directly with young people in 4-H clubs," says Penny Wilkes, 4-H provincial home economics and leadership development specialist. "Leaders need an opportunity to come together, discuss approaches to working with young people, and collect new ideas from their peers. We have a good mix of new and seasoned leaders in the program and both have ideas to contribute."

Another way for leaders to share ideas is the new 4-H homemaking leaders *Discussion Group* on the AAFRD web site. "This gives leaders, wherever they live in the province, access to craft, clothing, foods, and interior design project ideas," adds Wilkes. "They are encouraged to leave tips on shopping for supplies and we also listed related sites to visit on Internet."

The fall workshop is a great time to recharge for the upcoming year. Leaders return home ready with new 4-H activities and renewed enthusiasm for the upcoming year. To reach the 4-H homemaking leaders *Discussion Group* visit the AAFRD web site at **http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca** and scroll down the page to *Discussion Group*. Click on the link and then again on **ab.agriculture**

Contact: Penny Wilkes
(403)422-4H4H

Condition score cows this fall

Progress and new technologies are making a difference in nutritional health of cattle herds. An excellent way to measure this advancement is by condition scoring cattle.

"Although it sounds technical, condition scoring is simple and easy to do," says Terry Holmgren, cow/calf specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, St. Paul. "The procedure involves manually checking the fat deposited on the short ribs and around the tail head. The amount of fat present is a good indicator of the nutritional state of the animals."

Condition scoring is a better judge of body energy content than 'eyeballing' or using body to weight ratios. It is an important management tool as the nutritional state of a cow directly affects pregnancy rate, calving interval, milk production and the subsequent weaning weight of calves and heifer maturity.

"The condition scoring system commonly used goes from one to five," says Holmgren. "One is very thin and five is grossly fat. Producers want to keep cattle within a range of 2.5 to 3.0. Cattle coming off pasture and going onto feed should be in fairly good condition. It's very expensive, feed and money-wise, to put condition on cows prior to calving."

Cows should be condition scored three times a year. At fall pregnancy check, cows should be a 3.0. At calving, the optimum score is about a 2.5 with heifers at 3.0 because they're still growing. The third check should be done about 30 days before the start of the breeding season and they should have a score of 2.5.

Early winter feeding is a period of the least stress to cows and their nutritional requirements are the lowest. This is the time when a cow in 'good' condition, 3.0 to 3.5, can be fed to lose some weight. But caution should be used as twice as much feed is required to add one condition score to a thin cow than can be saved by reducing one condition score on a fat cow.

"Some cattlemen can judge how cattle are doing just by eye, but condition scoring is a low cost, quick way to accurately judge how a herd is doing," adds Holmgren. "Once the scoring information is gathered, producers can manage the feed supply to best meet the needs of the herd without excess and waste. Condition scoring is one of the cheapest and most overlooked management tool available and should be used more often."

Contact: Terry Holmgren
(403)645-6301

Expanding or building a hog operation

Interest in hog production is booming in Alberta. Producers considering building or expanding a hog operation need to ensure they have the resources required to develop a sustainable operation.

"There are four resource factors that must be considered in siting any hog production operation," says Ken Williamson, agricultural engineering technologist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Red Deer. "Land base, set back from neighbours, manure storage and water supply require some additional thought and planning."

Land base: feed can be brought in if a producer doesn't have the land base to grow all that's required. Land becomes a factor when it comes time to spread manure. Manure is a fertilizer, there must be a balance between the amount of fertilizer spread with the fertilizer requirement of the crop being grown. The publication, **Code of Practice for the Safe and Economic Handling of Animal Manures**, has land requirement charts that estimate acres of land required for a variety of sizes and types of operations. These charts are based on manure nitrogen content and typical crop requirements. Over-application can result in nitrate leaching into groundwater. A typical 2000 hog feeder operation will need about 250 acres of crop land to balance nitrogen requirements. Manure applied to satisfy crop nitrogen requirements can result in over application of phosphorous. Soil should be tested regularly to avoid nutrient buildup or imbalance.

Set back from neighbours: the Code of Practice also recommends separation distances for different sizes and types of operations. For example, a 2000 hog feeder barn should not be established closer than 1600 feet from a neighbour's residence, but a 200 head feeder barn could be as close as 700 feet.

Manure storage: in order to get the most from the fertilizer value of the manure, and least likelihood of environmental problems, a hog operation should be able to store manure for at least one year. Long term storage allows flexibility, avoids winter spreading, and minimizes the number of days per year that the operation will generate the high levels of odour associated with manure spreading. Earthen manure storages are the most common storage systems. It's important that they be constructed using suitable materials to minimize seepage.

Water supply: no farming operation can survive without adequate water supply. A 2000 hog feeder operation will require about 4000 gallons of water per day. Water is a limited, but renewable resource. It is important to ensure that the supply is adequate, that the use of this water will not have a

Cont'd on page 5

negative impact on existing users, and the long term rights to the supply are protected. This can be done by licencing the water use through Alberta Environmental Protection. The licencing process requires adequate testing to assure a sustainable water supply.

"Starting an operation requires planning," adds Williamson. "Addressing these important considerations before applying for a municipal development permit will help smooth out the development process. Contacting your local Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development office is a good first step in gathering the information needed when building or expanding a livestock operation."

Copies of the **Code of Practice for the Safe and Economic Handling of Animal Manures** are available for $10 plus GST at all Agriculture offices or through the Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6, or phone 1-800-292-5697 (add $2 plus GST for shipping and handling).

Contact: *Ken Williamson*
(403)340-5324

Focus on Favorites – new 4-H cookbook

No more waiting! The 4-H Foundation of Alberta's new 4-H cookbook *Focus on Favorites* is now available. More than 1800 recipes are included in this double volume set. All the recipes come from the kitchens of Alberta 4-H members, families, staff and friends.

"The previous 4-H cookbook, 4-H Favorites published in 1992, was a sell out at 50,000 copies, says Barry McDonald, executive director, 4-H Foundation of Alberta. "The new cookbook is set out in two volumes. Volume I – Appetizers & Main Courses is 316 pages and Volume II – Breads & Desserts features 392 pages of recipes.

Here's a sample of what's in the new cookbook:

GINGERBREAD MEN

½ cup shortening	1 ½ cups flour
½ cup packed brown sugar	½ tsp. baking soda
2 eggs	1 tsp. cinnamon
2 tbsp. water	½ tsp. ginger, to taste
1-113 g pkg. butterscotch pudding mix	

METHOD: Cream shortening. Add sugar, eggs and water. Mix pudding mix, flour, baking powder and spices together. Add to creamed mixture. Mix well and roll out. Cut out gingerbread boys or mold with hands. Bake at 350°F for 8 to 10 minutes. Cool and decorate.

submitted by: Trent McKee, Claresholm Willow Creek Classics 4-H Multi Club (from page 202 - *Focus on Favorites* Vol. II)

Retail price for the two volume set is $26 (includes GST) plus shipping costs. Start your Christmas shopping early. Buy a set today from your local 4-H'er or call the Alberta 4-H regional cookbook coordinator nearest you:

Southern		
	Mary An Unrau (Taber)	(403) 223-4912
Calgary		
	Bert Pringle (Didsbury)	(403) 335-4087
West Central		
	Darrel Neal (Lacombe)	(403) 782-2649
East Central		
	Elaine Almberg (Czar)	(403) 857-2133
Northeast		
	Norm Withers (Lavoy)	(403) 658-2414
Northwest		
	Gordon Fuhr (Morinville)	(403) 939-2177
Peace		
	Stella Pimm (Grimshaw)	(403) 338-2285

Credit card orders are available through the 4-H Foundation of Alberta at (403) 682-2153.

Contact: *Barry McDonald*
(403) 682 2153

Agri-News Briefs

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Bibliothèque nationale du Canada
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Regulatory reform in the food industry

The Food Institute of Canada is holding the Regulatory Reform in the Food Industry Conference on November 20, 1997 at the Best Western Richmond Inn, Richmond, B.C. This conference will feature sessions on the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, the body now responsible for inspection activities in the food industry, and Regulatory Reform and the Food Industry, a look at where the food industry is headed. Sessions on Biotechnology, emergency response, food labeling, risk analysis and regulatory reform in the U.S. are also offered. Registration fee is $315.65 (includes GST) and includes all conference sessions, luncheon, break refreshments and conference documentation. For further information or to register, contact the Food Institute of Canada at (613)772-1000, Ottawa, Ontario.

Alberta Sheep Symposium

Speakers from around the world are planned for the 1997 Alberta Sheep Symposium. The event is scheduled for November 28 to 30, 1997 at the Capri Centre, Red Deer. Along with poster sessions, Ask-the-Vet sessions, a new and improved lamb banquet, and a trade fair, the symposium has many features to interest sheep producers. Speakers will address topics such as: exotic breeds; genetic markers in sheep; scrapie; flock control programs for ovine progressive pneumonia (OPP), caseous lymphadenitis, Johnes and abortion diseases; nutrition, grazing and more. For further information, contact Cathy Gallivan (403)224-3962.

1997 Hort Congress

The Alberta Horticultural Congress is open to industry and offers professional growers the opportunity to attend 50 conference seminars. The congress, scheduled for November 6 to 8, 1997, at the Mayfield Inn and Trade Centre, also features the Prairie West Horticultural Trade Show. The 224 booth trade show is sold out to exhibitors from across Canada and from the U.S. Registration for the event is $170. For further information on the Congress, contact Shirley Alton (403)422-1789. For information on the trade show, contact Sue Grimm (403)489-1991.

Miss Rodeo Canada Pageant

Lakeland College is hosting the Miss Rodeo Canada Pageant on November 3, 1997. Twelve contestants representing communities from Morris, Manitoba to Cloverdale, B.C. will ride Lakeland College's Western Horsemanship schooling horses. Using the college horses gives contestants equal opportunity to exhibit their horsemanship skills. The horsemanship segment of the competition is held in the newly renovated Riding Arena at Lakeland College from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Spectators are encouraged to come and cheer on the contestants as they are judged on three prescribed patterns. Miss Rodeo Canada will be crowned on Friday, November 7 at the Canadian Finals Rodeo, Edmonton. For further information, contact Gary Cooper, instructor of agricultural sciences at Lakeland College, (403)853-8587

ACC election meetings

The Alberta Cattle Commission (ACC) is holding 37 fall producer and election meetings in Alberta from October 20 to November 12, 1997. At these meetings, ACC producer representatives are elected and resolutions are passed that form the basis for ACC policy for the upcoming year. Zone directors have details on producer and election meetings and can be contacted for further information.

Zone	Director	Town	(403) number
1	Arno Doerksen	Gem	641-2498
2	Herman Stroeve	Picture Butte	738-4417
3	Charles Groeneveld	High River	938-7843
4	Ron Pollick	Coronation	578-2192
5	Des Carney	Three Hills	443-7369
6	Marvin Molzan	Leduc	986-2417
7	Charles Westra	Gibbons	998-9083
8	Lyndon Mansell	Innisfree	592-2262
9	John McNaught	Woking	774-2111

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Two leaders chosen for 4-H Hall of Fame

"The 1997 inductees to the **Alberta 4-H Hall of Fame** are two outstanding 4-H leaders -- Ken Cox of Camrose and Angus Park of Trochu," says Ed Stelmach, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Mr. Cox and Mr. Park have demonstrated significant initiative, leadership and dedication to the 4-H program."

The announcement of this year's inductees to the Alberta 4-H Hall of Fame was made as part of the preparations leading up to National 4-H Week, November 3-9, 1997.

Ken Cox is internationally recognized for his knowledge in showing and judging beef cattle. He has organized workshops and demonstrations at the club, district and regional levels. Two grooming and showmanship booklets, written by Cox, were distributed to 4-H beef clubs throughout Canada. For 20 years, Cox was a member of the planning committee for the Provincial 4-H Beef Heifer Show. He has also helped organize and judge 4-H speaking competitions. Cox is very involved with Edmonton Northlands Park and has served as chairman of several committees and Farmfair International. He also participates with the Bashaw and District Agricultural Society and both the Alberta and Canadian Angus Associations. Cox and his wife farm in the Armena community and are strong supporters of local church and community organizations.

In 1963, Angus Park was recognized as a top 4-H member and received the Inter-Provincial 4-H Exchange award trip. He went on to be leader of both the Trochu and Huxley 4-H clubs. At the provincial level, Park was active on both the Alberta 4-H Council and the 4-H Foundation of Alberta. During his nine years with the provincial council, he served as first and second vice-president and president. From 1988 to 1997, he was a director of the 4-H Foundation of Alberta and held the positions of Site Management Chair, vice-chairman and chairman. Park is also serving his fourth term as chairman of the Crossroads Gas Co-op, having been involved with that organization for 25 years. Park and his wife run a purebred and commercial cattle operation, a hog operation and a grain farm in the Huxley area.

"Ken Cox and Angus Park have both dedicated many years to the 4-H program. It is appropriate that we recognize the contributions of these two individuals during National 4-H week," says Stelmach. They will be officially inducted into the Alberta 4-H Hall of Fame at the 4-H Leader's Conference Banquet in Red Deer on January 17, 1998.

Contact Mahlon Weir
(403) 422-4H4H

This Week is National 4-H Week

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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Engineering support for value-added processing

More help is now available for the agricultural processing sector in Alberta since the Agricultural Value-added Engineering Centre (AVEC) was launched in June, 1997.

"The goal of AVEC is to help meet the engineering-related needs of Alberta's growing agricultural value-added processing industry, in the food and non-food sectors," says John Chang, AVEC program manager with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "AVEC is an initiative of engineering services, a branch of the department that supports the agriculture and food industry. Funding is provided by the Agriculture and Food Council through the Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development Fund (CARDF), with financial resources from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada."

AVEC has three components: a research centre, a resource centre and funding to support eligible projects:

- **AVEC Research Centre** is located at the Ellerslie Research Station of the University of Alberta (on 127th Street, 1.3 km south of Ellerslie Road in south Edmonton). Research is directed towards finding solutions and developing information to address the industry's engineering problems and needs. The Centre is ready to work with industry partners and other researchers. Cooperative projects and other partnering opportunities are also considered.
- The **Resource Centre** is located in room 201 of the J.G. O'Donoghue Building, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton. The resource centre provides a variety of engineering-related information sources (books, magazines and commercial literature) and other resources to help meet the needs of the processing industry and its service sector. In addition, a public kiosk computer has been set up with an organized set of bookmarks to Internet sites covering a wide range of information on agricultural processing. The need for information on the planning and design of new processes and facilities, processing equipment, services and other related subjects is a common, basic requirement that most clients have.
- **Project Funding** is available and provides shared financial assistance for cost-shared projects dealing with engineering related needs of the agricultural processing industry. Priority will be given to projects designed to provide engineering support for the industry to acquire basic knowledge and skills for processing development; to solve critical, industry-wide problems; or to foster the adoption of key technologies. Individuals, organizations or companies are eligible to apply for funding.

AVEC personnel are ready to answer your questions. AVEC program manager is John Chang (403)427-4170. Questions regarding the research centre may be directed to Kris Chawla at (403)427-3944 or the research engineers Lope Tabil (403)415-2682 and Hong Qi (403)415-2683. John Kienholz (403)427-3990 is available at the resource centre. To answer questions on project funding, ask to speak to Marshall Eliason (403)427-4009.

Agricultural Value-added Engineering Centre
Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
J.G. O'Donoghue Building
Rm 201, 7000 - 113 Street
Edmonton, AB
T6H 5T6
Telephone: (403) 427-8764 Fax: (403) 422-7755

Contact: John Chang
(403)427-4170

Irrigation Act review report released

Over 30 issues are identified in the draft report made by the Irrigation Act Review Committee, chaired by Glen Clegg, MLA Dunvegan

"The Committee received 30 written submissions and met with over 150 Albertans during the July round of public meetings," says Len Fullen, project manager with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Since July, the Committee has met several times to develop recommendations. They now wish to receive feedback on the draft recommendations before finalizing their report."

The Irrigation Act, the legislation that governs irrigation districts in Alberta, is nearly 30 years old and in need of revision to meet the needs of the next decades.The Act establishes the rights and responsibilities of irrigation districts and their relationship with the users of their water conveyance systems.

The draft report, prepared by the Committee, is set out in four main sections: the role of the district corporations and boards; accountability of the boards to irrigators and other clients; accountability to the province and the people of Alberta; and, effective management of water resources.

"The Committee wants to ensure that the report is circulated to everyone who has an interest," adds Fullen. "All comments and submissions on the report will be received until November 21, 1997."

Anyone who would like to receive a copy and review the report is invited to contact the Policy Secretariat, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development at (403)422-2270 or fax (403)422-6540. Dial 310-0000 first for toll free access outside the Edmonton area.

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Written comments and submissions should be faxed to (403)422-6540 or sent to:

Len Fullen, project manager
J.G. O'Donoghue Building
#301, 7000 - 113 Street
Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6

The Review Committee will consider all comments received, prior to finalizing its report and recommendations to Hon. Ed Stelmach, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. This report will provide the government with a framework for revising the Irrigation Act over the next year.

Contact: Len Fullen (403)422-2270

John Deere supports new farm safety program for kids

John Deere Limited recently indicated they will again help support and promote farm safety in Alberta.

"We're very pleased that John Deere Limited is once again part of the farm safety program," says Solomon Kyeremanteng, head of farm safety with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The company is a good corporate citizen, concerned with the health and safety of farm families and the farm safety program is a natural fit."

In the past, John Deere Limited sponsored programs such as: ***Super Safety Hero***, ***Interview with Farm Accident*** and ***I Care*** postcards. In response to popular demand, a new campaign called ***A Safe Farm is a Great Place to Grow*** is being launched. Elementary students, grades one to four, will give their interpretation of this slogan by drawing a picture or writing a story explaining what growing up on a safe farm means to them.

"We have prepared two print pieces especially for this campaign, a large poster and a smaller poster that also serves as an entry form," says Kyeremanteng. "Entries will be reviewed and those selected will be used in future media campaigns including both print and multi-media. The selected entries will also appear on the Farm Safety Internet site."

"We're very excited about the farm safety program and our involvement with it," says Bonnie Hayden, marketing communications manager for John Deere Limited. "John Deere has always been committed to safety on farms. Knowledge and awareness is a big part of keeping farm families safe."

The farm safety program is very well received by children, families and communities. A key component that lends success to farm safety campaigns is conveying serious messages in a fun, interesting and exciting way. Targeting children gives the program wide exposure to an audience very much affected by the change in attitude the program promotes.

In the last two years, there has been an increase in the number of farm related injuries reported, including 22 deaths in 1996 alone," says Kyeremanteng. "This increase is due in part to the expansion of agriculture in the province. It also points clearly to a greater need for farm safety and an emphasis on communicating farm safety messages to farm families. It is very timely that John Deere Limited, a sponsor with considerable presence in the agricultural community, has joined the farm safety program. I am delighted and am looking forward to working closely with them."

Contact: Solomon Kyeremanteng (403)427-4227
Bonnie Hayden (905)945-7314

Alberta horse breeders and owners conference

Each year in Alberta, the horse industry section of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD) organizes the ***Alberta Horse Breeders and Owners Conference***. The event is the premier horse conference in North America and one that Alberta's horse enthusiasts look forward to. The 1998 conference is being held on January 10 and 11, 1998 at the Capri Centre in Red Deer.

"The 1998 conference will feature 15 internationally recognized speakers," says Les Burwash, manager of equine programs with AAFRD. "The organizing committee have put together an excellent program of speakers and presentations. Topics such as the health and dental care of horses, equine research, training, tack and horse industry trends are included in the agenda."

The conference is arranged so that attendees can follow four streams of interest -- Arabian, Quarter Horse, Thoroughbred and all breeds. While many follow the program designed for a particular breed preference, conference participants can attend any of the sessions and will receive the printed materials from all sessions.

The program starts with a wine and cheese reception on Friday, January 9 at 7:00 p.m. Saturday's sessions begin at 9:00 a.m. John Scott presents *Horses in the Movies* at the Saturday evening special and on Sunday, the conference wraps up with another full day of sessions.

Conference registration is $75 per person. For more information about the 1998 conference, contact Burwash in Airdrie at (403)948-8532. Government numbers are toll-free by dialling 310-0000 to connect to a RITE line.

Contact: Les Burwash
(403)948-8532

Market focus workshop

A three module, hands-on workshop designed especially for farmers, agri-business, food processors and Albertans interested in adding value to agricultural products, marketing specialty crops or alternative livestock is being held in several locations in the province this winter.

"Producers and processors who want to place agricultural products in new markets will find the workshop a valuable tool," says Kathy Lowther, rural development specialist – business with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The workshop leader, Mike Leslie is president of Nakodo Consulting Inc. He specializes in assisting agricultural and agri-food businesses with market development."

Topics covered in the nine-week program include: production focus vs market focus; constructing market focus questions; finding information on market opportunities; getting answers about the marketplace; evaluating answers; creating market intelligence; creating business and marketing plans; and solving regulatory and political barriers.

The workshop provides the opportunity to engage in live teleconference sessions with trade representatives from Asia, Mexico and Europe. An optional interactive question and answer session via the Internet is also available.

Workshop dates and locations for upcoming modules are:

• Bow Island	November 10, 18, 19
• Lacombe	November 17, 18, 21
• Airdrie	December 5, 8, 9
• Northeast (TBA)	January 16, 19, 22
• Northwest (TBA)	January 20, 22, 23

"Each module includes two class days and one evening teleconference," adds Lowther. Module 2 and 3 dates will be announced during the first module in the various locations."

Registration date is one week before each module and the workshop fee is $150/module plus GST.

For more information, contact a rural development specialist: Brenda Lea MacPhail (403)529-3616, Medicine Hat; Kathy Lowther (403)556-4264, Olds; Lynn Stegman (403)782-3301, Lacombe; Leona Reynolds-Zayak (403)853-8101, Vermilion; or, Sharon Homeniuk (403)963-6101, Stony Plain.

Contact: Kathy Lowther
(403)556-4264

Agri-News Briefs

Food Processing Development Centre fee schedule

A new fee schedule for the Food Processing Development Centre came into effect on November 1, 1997. Services provided by the Centre have increased sharply over the past few years resulting in staff additions and the purchase of a wider range of processing equipment. Facility use has doubled, due to increases in interim processing, contracted projects and the development of value-added products from both livestock and crops sectors. To serve the needs of the growing value-added food processing industry in Alberta, it is necessary to increase fees to offset the cost of operations. All existing contracts will be honoured, however, all new contracts will be based on the new fee structure. A list of rates is available from the Food Processing Development Centre (403)986-4793.

Commercial Elk Industry

A new factsheet has been added to Ag-Ventures, a series of agriculture business profiles. The most recent Ag-Venture deals with the commercial elk industry. It is intended as an introduction to commercial elk production and focuses on key management and marketing issues in the industry. This comprehensive factsheet covers industry highlights and the state of the industry in Alberta and in Canada. Regulatory considerations, marketing, production and economic factors associated with the industry are addressed. The ***Commercial Elk Industry*** factsheet, Agdex #481/830-1 is available at all Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district offices or at the Publications Office, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6.

Weed control in field peas

Field peas are very tolerant of early, light spring frost and is usually one of the first crops planted. However, peas are poor competitors with weeds. Pea growth in early spring is slower than many weeds making critical weed control difficult. Weed control in field peas under a direct seeding system brings new challenges to prairie farmers. As a source of information, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development has produced a new ***Agri-Fax***, Agdex #142/642-2, ***Herbicides for Direct Seeding Weed Control in Field Peas***. Copies are available at agriculture district offices and through the Publications Office, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6.

Pork industry symposium

The 1997 Saskatchewan Pork Industry Symposium, being held on November 13 and 14, is organized by Pork Central and the Research Committee of SPI Marketing Group. The two-day agenda includes seminars, interactive workshops and information sessions. This year's program addresses issues such as: producing pork in an integrated system, building community relations, production topics, manure management, health and disease, and quality assurance. Keynote speakers from across Canada and the U.S. will be featured. The cost for the symposium is $105 plus GST (includes banquet). Daily registration is $50 plus GST (does not include banquet). For further information, contact Wendy Hayes, coordinator, at (306)933-5078.

What's new – agriculture multi-media

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's multi-media branch has released the latest edition of ***What's New***. The updated listing includes over 65 new videos that are available for loan or purchase from the department. For the first time, the publication includes computer CD-ROMs for home PCs. Copies of the free ***What's New*** publication are available by calling Ken Blackley (403)422-3951 in Edmonton. When calling from outside the Edmonton area, dial 310-0000 first for toll free access.

Agriculture night in Westlock

On Saturday, November 15, the Westlock and District Chamber of Commerce and the Town & Country Section of the Westlock News are co-hosting a special dinner evening in salute to farmers. The Hon. Ed Stelmach, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, is the special guest speaker for the evening. The doors to the Westlock Community Hall will open at 5:30 for a mini-trade show and the dinner starts at 6:30. Trade show exhibitors are providing door prizes. Tickets for the evening are $15 and available at the Westlock News, Barrhead Leader, Athabasca Advocate or from the Chamber of Commerce directors. For further information, contact Les Dunford (403)349-3033.

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AGRI-NEWS

November 10, 1997

Report on Alberta's beef industry released

Market opportunities exist that could double the demand for Alberta's beef. A recent study, **Resources for Beef Industry Expansion in Alberta,** looked at the resources needed to accommodate expansion of this industry.

"Our study looked at whether natural resources, feed and water, and environmental issues, particularly manure handling, would permit a doubling in Alberta's cattle feeding and processing industry," explains Dale Engstrom, head of Alberta Agriculture's Beef and Dairy Group.

The study used data bases on crop and beef production, water and soils to map the resources required for cow-calf and feedlot expansion.

The report did not try to answer every question about expansion in the cattle feeding industry. For example, transportation infrastructure is a key question for municipalities and the provincial government. The prospects of future profitability in cattle feeding, a major factor in expansion of the industry, was also not addressed.

"This report can help in long range planning," says Neil MacAlpine, water management engineer with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, who led the analysis. "The study used the best information at hand to point to key trends and issues. Highlighting questions like manure odour and water supply will help the cattle industry focus on solutions before they become significant problems. Alberta has an image world-wide as a supplier of safe clean food from a clean environment. That is an advantage we can't afford to lose."

Copies of the report can be ordered from the Publications Office, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. The report costs $20 plus GST (add $2 plus GST for shipping and handling). Visa and Mastercard orders can be made by phoning 1-800-292-5697 or faxing 403-422-8835.

Contact:	*Dale Engstrom*	*Neil MacAlpine*
	(403) 427-4516	*(403) 427-3779*

Report says cow/calf industry has to focus on forages

Cow/calf production in Alberta is limited by pasture capacity. Tame pasture production needs to increase. Fortunately, technologies do exist that can support significant increases in pasture capacity if there is an economic incentive to do so. Those are messages for an expanding cattle industry in Alberta, concludes a study sponsored by the Alberta Product Team for Beef. "Alberta's cow/calf sector has expanded rapidly over the last beef cycle to supply the expansion in Alberta's feedlots," explains Dale Engstrom, head, Beef and Dairy

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

Group, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Market opportunities could double the demand for Alberta's beef. "

The analysis in **Resources for Beef Industry Expansion in Alberta** is a detailed examination of forage resources and its use by the beef cattle industry. It, along with the study completed in 1996, shows that pasture capacity is limiting cow/calf expansion and that pasture production needs to increase if the industry is to expand.

"The 1996 study concluded that at present pasture production levels, a 25 per cent increase in cow/calf numbers would require an additional 1.7 million acres of tame pasture. This equals a 37 per cent increase in tame pasture production," says Myron Bjorge, provincial forage specialist, Alberta Agriculture in Lacombe. "This means acreage for cow/calf expansion may be limiting industry growth, although the economics of forage production compared to cereal production will play an important role in determining forage acreage.

"Also, significant increases could be made in the long term by adapting existing and developing new pasture technology. The 1997 analysis looked at variations between pasture, hay, sustainable grazing rates and cow numbers across the province and mapped the difference between supply and demand on a regional basis."

Barry Adams, southern range manager with Public Lands, Alberta Agriculture, concurs: "We were able to fine-tune our estimates of what pasture grazing rates would be if we focused on sustainable grazing. We didn't assume any special management on pastures, fertilizing, rotational grazing or special grass species. The estimates of pasture production represent conventional management focused on long term sustainability."

Pasture capacity in the province barely equals pasture demand from Alberta's beef cattle and sheep, dairy and other grazing livestock. At the provincial level, there is no excess pasture capacity. The maps provide additional information. Some of Alberta's most intensive cow/calf areas have pasture deficits. Northeast Alberta and east-central Alberta and an area north of Olds had the most significant deficits.

"The size of pasture deficits in those areas are a warning to cow/calf producers that forage management should be a priority before more herd expansion. Drought or a sharp rise in hay prices could spell trouble" notes Neil MacAlpine, water management engineer with Alberta Agriculture, who led the analysis.

Adams points out that public grazing lands are not a safety valve either. "Native range pastures are stocked at capacity although there is potential for small improvements in grazing efficiencies and productivity."

"Forage and beef specialists have felt for awhile that expansion opportunities are limited by tame pasture," says Bjorge. "The forage resource needs attention and dedicated management for long term production."

David Spiess and Leon Marciak helped map straw and chaff resources. "Cow/calf producers are already using straw and chaff for winter feed in northeast Alberta," says Marciak. "That takes some pressure off hay land which could be converted to high producing pasture. Fortunately, the areas with the most serious pasture deficits are also the areas with significant straw and chaff resources."..

The study also changed perspectives on where the cow/calf industry is located and the size of operations. The cow/calf industry is predominately north of Calgary. West-central, east-central and northeast Alberta have concentrations of cows as large as the big ranches in southwest Alberta.

The structure of the cow/calf sector changed substantially during the last beef cycle. In 1989, the most common herd size was 80 to 180 head. By 1993, most cows were in herds larger than 270, with the largest group of cows in herds with more than 530 head.

John Kirtz with Snowy Owl Software points to the strength of the software developed as the key to the analysis in the study: "We were able to provide provincial maps with detail down to the township because the software is very strong in handling large multiple data bases and complicated statistics and analysis. Maps are just another way of displaying information."

"Our work was geared to answering provincial questions," says MacAlpine. "But the maps are detailed enough that municipal planners and cattle producers can learn something at the local level as well."

Copies of the report can be ordered from the Publications Office, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. The report costs $20 plus GST (and $2 shipping and handling plus GST). Visa and Mastercard orders can be made by phoning 1-800-292-5697 or faxing 403-422-8835.

Contact:	*Dale Engstrom*	*Neil MacAlpine*
	(403) 427-4516	*(403) 427-3779*

On-line farm community

Agri-ville is an on-line farm community that accesses answers, resources and people. A community of farmers and ranchers, government and industry specialists connect to solve problems and discuss new opportunities for farm businesses. Agri-ville is the fun and easy way to enhance farm management and skills! This new and exciting initiative of support for farmers was launched November 7.

Cont'd on page 3

"Farm Managers can increase their access to information and expertise through this on line community," says Jeff Millang, farm management specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. " It allows both farm managers and experts to cross the barriers of time and distance. It's flexible, convenient and offers a bigger and broader range of information."

Real-time chats and threaded web discussions enable a network of farm managers and agricultural specialists to discuss, challenge ideas and solve problems at a low cost. **Meeting Rooms** specific for marketing, financial management and production management serve as an open forum for farm managers and agricultural experts. Private **Club Rooms** will appeal to marketing clubs or producer groups wanting to enhance communication and services. Club Rooms are password protected and allow joint sharing of information among members. Agri-ville can custom-build Club Rooms and Market Outlooks.

Agri-ville features the **Specialist's Corner** where farm managers can access timely news articles and editorials written by specialists in a certain topic. The **School House** delivers courses on site for practical, hands-on training, which allows producers to participate in their own home and at their own pace.

"Agri-ville is a great management tool for producers to access the newest and best information from a variety of sources, government and industry" says Millang. "The online community brings together experience, knowledge and synergism of farm managers from across the province, western Canada and possibly North America. Agri-ville is user friendly and is continually changing to adapt to the needs of it's community."

Agri-Web Services developed Agri-ville in response to needs identified at producer focus groups. Agri-ville is a pilot project with funding provided by Farm Business Management Program (FBMP) and Agri-Web Services, a division of Canadian Rural Computer Services Inc.

Contact: *Jeff Millang (403)742-7500*
jeff.millang@agric.gov.ab.ca

Delin Sheenan-Millang (403)-742-5474
agri-web@telusplanet.net
Internet: www.agri-ville.com

Straight from the horse's mouth

The lines of communication run directly from a rider's hands to a horse's mouth. Whether riding for pleasure or competition, this important link between horse and rider is paramount to performance.

"There are two main factors when it comes reining, the horse's mouth and the bit you put in it," says Les Burwash, manager of equine programs with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development in Airdrie. "Equine dentistry is an area of interest that has received increased attention over the last few years. The potential for problems from sharp enamel points, tall teeth and other abnormalities in a horse's mouth is something that more owners need to be aware of."

On January 10 and 11, at the 1998 Horse Breeders and Owners Conference, Dr. Leon Scrutchfield will address ***Dental Care for Performance Horses***. Scrutchfield is an equine veterinarian who teaches an equine dental elective at Texas A&M University's School of Veterinarian Medicine.

"Since a horse's teeth are out of sight, unfortunately they're also out of mind to many owners," says Scrutchfield. "Most knowledgeable horsemen and veterinarians recognize that teeth problems directly affect a horse's rideability. Instead of waiting until poor health, performance and attitude indicate that there is a problem, owners need to start preventative dental programs with horses."

"After taking care of your horse's teeth and mouth, the next key factor in getting a horse to perform like it's got power-steering is fitting it with a proper bit," says Burwash. "The age of a horse and level of training; its function and purpose; and, a rider's ability and 'hands' all play an important part in selecting a proper bit." Greg Darnall, Darnall Bits out of Lone Oak, Texas, is scheduled to make a presentation on ***Bits and Bitting*** at the conference.

"No matter what phase of training or portion of the performance horse industry a person is involved in, the bridle bit is of primary importance," says Darnall. "First and foremost, remember that there are no two horses nor two riders that are exactly the same. Besides the physical balance and function of a bit, finding the best combination between a rider's hand and the bit is the key."

Darnall will cover the proper bits for the various stages of training and performance disciplines and a bit's physical structure.

"The 1998 Horse Breeders and Owners Conference will feature 15 internationally recognized speakers," adds Burwash. "To get the straight goods on these subjects, these two sessions are well worth attending."

Cont'd on page 4

The conference is arranged so that attendees can follow four lines of interest -- Arabian, Quarter Horse, Thoroughbred and all breeds. Conference participants can attend any of the sessions and will receive the printed materials from all sessions.

The conference is being held on January 10 and 11, 1998 at the Capri Centre in Red Deer. Registration is $75 per person. For more information about the conference, contact Burwash at (403)948-8532. Government numbers are toll free by dialling 310-0000 to connect to a RITE line.

Contact: Les Burwash
(403)948-8532

4-H winter camp

A 143 acre outdoor classroom is open for winter camp this year. The Environmental Appreciation Program (EAP), operating at the Alberta 4-H Centre at Battle Lake near Westerose, offers a new experience in the outdoors.

Like EAP's popular spring camps, the winter program encourages appreciation for the environment by providing hands-on experiences while working with the Alberta Education curriculum. The camps attract many school groups and youth clubs.

"The camps are so much fun and I'm impressed that 80 per cent of the activities relate to the curriculum,"says Bernice Youck, teacher at Greenfield Elementary School in Edmonton.

The main themes featured at the camps involve native history, wildlife, geology and plant life. More specifically, at the winter camp, some activities include tracking signs of wildlife, identifying edible plants, and learning how small animals survive in the winter.

The winter program, like the other camps, varies from one to four days and can be customized to different needs and price ranges.

"The staff is knowledgeable and work very well with the children, our staff and the parents," adds Youck who has participated in the environmental camps since they first began. "If there are any program needs, the staff is very approachable."

The lakeshore property was purchased by the 4-H Foundation of Alberta from Dr. Grant MacEwan in 1977. Through the years, the Alberta 4-H Centre expanded into a permanent camping facility. It now includes a main lodge, dormitory, environmental centre, office/residence complex, beach area and more than seven kilometres of trails to explore.

Contact: Barry McDonald
(403) 682-2153
e-mail: bigmac@ccinet.ab.ca

Talented young Albertan is a champion of farm safety

The Farm Safety Program welcomes Debbie Nelson, one of Canada's bright, new, up and coming recording artists, as a champion of farm safety.

"The message of farm safety is an important one," says Solomon Kyeremanteng. "Unfortunately, the importance of farm safety can be a lesson that takes on a personal meaning after a loss. Debbie Nelson suffered such a loss and since that time has identified Farm Safety as a band wagon she has both feet firmly planted on."

Nelson, a 4-H member for several years, was involved in public speaking, working with her animals and taking an active part with many 4-H activities in her area. Just over two years ago, when Nelson was 18, she lost her father in a tragic farm accident at the family farm near the small town of Delia.

"I know the impact that an accident on the farm can have," says Nelson. "Farm safety is a positive message I'm proud to champion. I don't want anyone else to learn about farm safety by accident."

Nelson is taking a cross-Canada radio tour in 1998 which will give her the opportunity to discuss the importance of farm safety during live interviews on radio stations in Alberta and other provinces.

"We're delighted to have Debbie Nelson as a member of the farm safety team," adds Kyeremanteng.

Contact: Solomon Kyeremanteng
(403)427-4227

4-H homemaking leaders update

Almost 30 4-H leaders attended the fifth 4-H Homemaking Leaders' Update, October 24 - 26, at the Alberta 4-H Centre at Battle Lake, near Westerose. It was a weekend full of new ideas, 4-H information and gearing up for a new 4-H year.

Workshop sessions on various new programs and project ideas were given by Elaine Lyster, key leader, Vilna; Karen Nelson, home economics teacher, Camrose; Laurie Stevenson, Red Deer; Linda Rasmuson, key leader, Camrose; and, Joni Pitzel, leader, Alder Flats. Lorraine Thirsk, home economics teacher from Wetaskiwin, demonstrated homemaking projects applicable to young entrepreneurs.

"The banquet guest speaker was Linda St. Onge, from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Leduc Food Processing Development Centre. Her presentation on current initiatives at the centre, resulted in several groups requesting tours.

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Janet Kerr, regional 4-H specialist, Stettler, showed the group how to use the Internet for program project ideas and explained the new AAFRD discussion groups that will be set up for 4-H leaders to exchange ideas.

On Saturday evening, leaders sewed up a storm creating some 200 turbans for cancer patients. The turbans were donated to patients at the Edmonton's Cross Cancer institute and Calgary's, Tom Baker Cancer Centre. "It was quite a sight to see the assembly line of leaders working on this community service project," says Penny Wilkes, provincial 4-H home economics and leadership specialist, Alberta Agriculture.

The update concluded on Sunday morning. Maureen Laidlaw, key leader, Bow Island once again entertained and delighted everyone with her *Through The 4-H Years* session.

The Homemaking Leaders' Update, held every two years, was sponsored by AAFRD. This year Central Alberta Florists provided the supplies for one of the craft sessions.

Contact: Penny Wilkes
(403)422-4H4H
e-mail: penny.wilkes@agric.gov.ab.ca

Agri-News Briefs

You'll want to bee there

The 1998 Bee Masters Course is being offered February 16 to 21 at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C. Bee Masters is a week-long course in advanced beekeeping that is held every second year. Topics include: seasonal management, nutrition, queen rearing, pollination, diseases, mites, Africanized bees, pesticides, marketing and hive products (honey, pollen, propolis, royal jelly, wax, etc.). Participants are expected to have previously kept bees and have some knowledge about bees and beekeeping. Hobbyists, sideliners and commercial beekeepers are welcome. For further program and registration information, contact Athena Roussinos (604)291-3649 or Christina Wong (604)291-4910, Burnaby, B.C. or e-mail: **Conference_Services@sfu.ca**

Beef managers classic

The Beef Managers Classic, scheduled for Friday, November 21, provides producers with the tools to take their beef operation to the next level of profitability. Seven speakers will make presentations at the Classic being held in Rochester (south of Athabasca), November 21. One of the speakers on the Classic agenda is Mike Leslie. He specializes in market development of agriculture products for export to Japan. Leslie will discuss how to determine where a market exists and how to fill the market need. He will also explore options on how to capture value to keep more of the profit from a beef enterprise. The cost is $15 per person and includes lunch. Deadline for registering is November 17. For more information or to register, contact Trevor Yurchak, beef specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, (403)675-2252.

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AGRI-NEWS

November 17, 1997

CANADIANA

Innovations for reduced tillage and pulse production

Pulse crop production and reduced tillage are the focus of a one-day conference and trade show at the Exhibition Pavilion, Lethbridge Exhibition Grounds, December 2, 1997 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

"The program is organized under the direction of several southern Alberta farmers to be practical and informative," says Robert Dunn, southern region conservation coordinator with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "It is also an opportunity to meet with leading researchers, specialists and farmers for first hand information on reduced tillage and pulse production."

A variety of sessions include: pulse crop options for dryland, pulse production practices, new developments in seeding equipment, and weed and fertilizer management options for direct seeding. A special session on developments in dry bean production will follow a noon luncheon business meeting of the Alberta Pulse Growers Commission, Zone 1.

"This year's event is the fourth in a series of fall conferences that attract over 300 farmers each year," adds Dunn. "Tom Hoogeem, head of Monsanto's Global Environmental Operations, is the key-note speaker and will address current and future environmental responsibilities and challenges facing the ag-industry."

Conference sponsors include the Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture Program (AESA), the Alberta Conservation Tillage Society (ACTS), Alberta Pool — Special Crops Business Unit, the Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative (ARTI), Bourgault Industries, CJOC Radio, Finning, Flexicoil, Monsanto, Morris, and Zeneca Agro.

Registration is $30 and includes conference handouts and lunch. Those registering before November 26 will be entered in a special draw for one tonne of fertilizer, compliments of Agrium. For more information or to register, contact the Lethbridge Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development office at (403)381-5126.

Contact:Robert Dunn (403)381-5117

Cool October

NOV 18 1997

The overall provincial average temperature for October in Alberta was 1.5 degrees below normal and the provincial average precipitation was near normal.

The provincial average temperature for the month was 1.5 degrees below the 1961 to 1990 average of 5.1 degrees Celsius Most Alberta locations reported monthly average temperatures ranging from near normal to three degrees below normal. The averages are based on data recorded at 59 Environment Canada climate stations across Alberta.

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

"October is usually the fourth driest month of the year and with the developing El Nino this year, Albertans have kept an eye on precipitation," says Peter Dzikowski, agri-weather resource specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The provincial average precipitation of 19.1 mm was 1.3 mm below the 1961 to 1990 average of 20.4 mm for October."

The Peace region was the wettest, reporting 120 per cent of normal October precipitation. The northeast and northwest regions also reported above normal precipitation while the south and central regions reported below normal precipitation in October. Amounts of three to 40.8 mm, or 18 to 230 per cent of normal, were reported in Alberta.

Esther recorded the greatest precipitation departure, receiving 31.2 mm of precipitation, 229 per cent of normal. Rocky Mountain House reported the greatest temperature departure in Alberta, three degrees below the monthly average of 4.8 degrees for October.

Contact: Peter Dzikowski
(403)427-3594

Farm succession resource fair

Farm families looking at transferring farm ownership face a myriad of resource materials. A large number of workbooks, publications and other resources are available, so many that they can seem daunting.

"This winter, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development is holding a number of Farm Succession Resource Fairs in central and southern Alberta," says Dean Dyck, farm management specialist, Red Deer. "One-day seminars have been planned for Albertans interested in reviewing resources in an informal setting and meeting with professionals who specialize in farm succession."

These free seminars will provide display tables showing a number of hands-on farm succession resource materials. Farm families can look through the materials prior to making a decision to purchase the appropriate materials for their situation.

"A number of guest speakers will hold short executive sessions where current issues in farm transfer will be discussed," adds Dyck. "Participants will also have time to talk to the professionals one-on-one. The seminars will run much like a trade show. Participants can attend as many or as few of the executive seminars as they want."

Each seminar starts at 10:00 a.m. and concludes at 3:00 p.m. The executive sessions will run every 30 minutes starting at 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

Seminars are scheduled for:

Red Deer	Black Knight Inn	December 4
Strathmore	Strathmore Family Centre	December 5
Medicine Hat	Provincial Building	January 8, 1998

For further information, contact Dean Dyck in Red Deer (403)340-7007; Ted Darling in Airdrie (403)948-8524; Brad Smith in Taber (403)223-7907; or, Colleen Crozier in Calgary (403)235-2885.

Contact: Dean Dyck
(403)340-7007

What it means to be a horse owner

Being a horse owner is more than your name on registration papers or having a horse out in the pasture. The time and attention to nutrition and management are very much a part of responsible owning and breeding.

At the **Alberta Horse Breeders and Owners Conference** at the Capri Centre, Red Deer, on January 10 and 11, 1998, *Ownership in the Horse Industry* is one of the subjects on the agenda that no doubt will stir considerable discussion.

"We are very pleased to have Dr. Steve Jackson, Kentucky Equine Research, on the panel of internationally recognized speakers," says Les Burwash, manager of equine programs, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, and one of the conference organizers. "Jackson is an avid horseman himself as well as having extensive experience in breeding and evaluating horses."

Jackson, a native of Texas, has been involved in the business and sport of horses all of his life. After attaining a BSc in Animal Science at Texas A&M University (1975) he joined the faculty of the University of Kentucky as extension horse specialist working on his Ph.D. in Equine Nutrition and Exercise Physiology. From 1981 until 1990 he was a member of the faculty of the Animal Science department at the University of Kentucky.

"Jackson left academics in 1990 and became a partner in Kentucky Equine Research, an international nutrition and management consulting firm dealing exclusively with horses," says Burwash. "In 1997, he founded Bluegrass Equine Nutrition and currently consults for many farms in the Thoroughbred industry. He has traveled extensively to Japan, Ireland, England and France to do nutrition consulting and conformation analysis. Jackson evaluates more than 3,000 yearlings annually. He is also a recognized judge for the American Paint Horse Association having judged the Paint World Show twice."

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Attracting speakers of the caliber of Dr. Jackson to this annual Alberta event is one of the reasons the **Horse Breeders and Owners Conference** is hailed as the premier horse conference.

The program for the 1998 conference follows four lines of interest — Arabian, Quarter Horse, Thoroughbred and all breeds. Conference participants may attend any of the sessions and will receive the printed materials from all sessions.

Conference registration is $75 per person. For more information or to register, contact Burwash in Airdrie at (403)948-8532. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE line.

Contact: Les Burwash
(403)948-8532

Recent Asian trade mission a success

The trade mission to Asia by Alberta's Agriculture Minister, Ed Stelmach and a delegation of Alberta agri-businesses is already resulting in numerous contacts and new leads. Stelmach recently returned from a three-week trip to Japan, China and Taiwan and joined Premier Klein at key points during the Premier's trade and investment mission to Asia.

"I'm delighted with the new relationships and opportunities that have developed as part of this mission," says Stelmach. "Building new markets and cooperation between governments are key aspects of economic development for Alberta over the next decade."

"We were pleased to have Mr. Stelmach with us," says Rob Turner, president of Olds College who accompanied the Minister on the trade mission. "We returned with confirmation of a $3 million Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) contract involving the Northeast Agricultural University in Harbin, China. The Minister's involvement there helped conclude and solidify the agreement that is an exchange program under which about 50 students from Olds College will travel to China over the next six years and an equal number of their Chinese counterparts will visit Olds College during the same time period."

In Japan, the delegation met with key players in the pork and beef industries to sell the **Alberta Advantage** — high-quality, competitively-priced products specifically produced for the demands of Japanese consumers. These meetings included talks with key importers and retailers for the promotion of Alberta value-added food products. There was also a business signing ceremony in Tokyo with Japanese companies that have established joint ventures or trade with Alberta companies. Alberta trade and investment opportunities were also promoted through Japanese media coverage and in speeches by the Premier and Stelmach.

In China, the delegation participated in several business signings. Stelmach signed an agreement with the People's Republic of China to provide technical support services to joint Alberta-China commercial beef development projects. The beef technical agreement will assist China in expanding its commercial livestock industry while providing Alberta companies and their beef products with new business opportunities and easier access to the Chinese market. This signing was witnessed by Premier Klein, Canadian Ambassador Balloch and the Minister of Agriculture for China, Liu Jiang

In Taiwan, the delegation met with key producers and investors to promote Alberta as the place to invest and conduct business in the long term, especially in beef, pork and other value-added food products. The delegation stressed the message that long-term investment in these sectors will assure Taiwan a reliable supply of quality agri-food products for its own domestic consumption as well as export to Japan. This reliability is especially important as Taiwan needs to replace its own lost hog and pork production due to an outbreak of foot and mouth disease.

"It was repeated to us a number of times during our trip that Japanese consumers demand the highest quality and reliability of supply. This is the message I am taking to producers and processors," says Stelmach. "We have to listen to our customers and develop products to suit their needs if we want to successfully develop an export market to Asia. Alberta's international reputation for a pristine environment and high-quality food products is opening the doors in Asian export markets. Our top priorities are making sure that quality, food safety, health and preservation of the environment are protected and enhanced as these new market opportunities are developed."

Travel and accommodation costs for the official delegation totaled an estimated $40,500.

Contact:	*Ron Glen*	*Barry Mehr*
	(403) 427-2137	*(403) 427-2442*

Farm Safety program for kids

The Delia Agricultural Society hosted its third annual Farm Safety Program for Kids on June 21 and 22, 1997. Seventeen youths, aged 10 to 17, participated in the two-day program.

"We've found that using a lot of hands-on learning helps the children retain more of what's being taught," says Jill Clayholt, one of the program organizers. "The main purpose is to have young Albertans come away with more confidence in themselves and a greater respect for dangers around the farm."

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The program is jam-packed with presentations. This year, the local fire chief demonstrated how to use an extinguisher properly and each of the participants was able to try it for themselves. Alberta Power used their high voltage display to demonstrate how electricity will arc from power lines to anything near them. The group was given safety tips on what to do in the event of a downed power line and how to keep equipment and themselves away from power lines. Emergency First Aid and the toxic levels of chemicals and pesticides were also discussed. The two days ended with a Fashion Show of proper chemical gear and protective clothing.

"Getting local experts, farm equipment dealers and farmers to make the presentations to the kids seems to bring the messages home with great clarity," says Clayholt. "An important part of the program is the help, shared expertise and knowledge of Eric Jones, farm safety program, and Laura Lee Billings both with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. The community sponsors and support from Alberta Agriculture have made this program very successful."

The program placed third in the cross-Canada Federation of Agriculture Farm Innovations contest. It was the only educational program considered.

"A video, sponsored by UFA and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, was made of the this year's program and will be entered for consideration in the Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies' (AAAS) Project of the Year contest," says Wendy Pruden, secretary-treasurer of AAAS. "The AAAS Project of the Year contest is sponsored by the Royal Bank of Canada. Contest winners will be announced at the 1998 AAAS convention, February 13 to 15, 1998 in Grande Prairie."

"The Farm Safety Program appreciates the work and dedication of concerned Albertans and groups like the Delia Agricultural Society,"says Eric Jones. "Through their efforts, farm safety messages are being heard by farm families and young Albertans across the province."

Contact: *Eric Jones*
(403)427-4231
Jill Clayholt
(403)364-2332
Wendy Pruden
(403)427-2174

Alberta hog industry receives major boost

Alberta hog producers will be able to reap the benefits of technological and market advances thanks to a new federal-provincial industry development fund for the hog industry.

The creation of the Canada-Alberta Hog Industry Development Fund (HIDF) for product and market research and development was announced by Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Lyle Vanclief, and Minister of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Ed Stelmach.

"The fund demonstrates the cooperative efforts of industry and government to strengthen the overall research and industry development strategies for Alberta's hog industry," says Vanclief. "The Government of Canada's contribution of up to $2.3 million is part of our commitment to help expand and develop Alberta's hog industry."

This contribution will come from Alberta's share of federal safety net funding pursuant to the 1996 federal-provincial framework agreement.

"Alberta's contribution of $2.3 million has already been made in the form of a transition payment to hog producers," says Stelmach. "The establishment of this fund will ensure that Alberta hog production remains competitive and environmentally sustainable by benefitting from technological and market advances that result from activities supported by the fund. We have the opportunity to significantly expand our production in this province. This fund will help ensure that producers have the opportunity to utilize the best and most advanced technology and farming practices available."

The HIDF will fund, among other activities, product and market research, market development and promotion, biotechnology development and value-added initiatives.

The fund will be administered by the Alberta Pork Producers Development Corporation (APPDC).

"I am pleased that governments recognize the importance of having industry lead this initiative," says APPDC chairman Roger Charbonneau. "Alberta hog producers are in the best position to work with other stakeholders to determine what needs to be done for our industry to grow and prosper."

Contact: *Vern Greenshields*
(613) 759-1020
Ed Schultz
(403) 474-8288
Ken Moholitny
(403) 427-3078

Backgrounder

Canada-Alberta Hog Industry Development Fund investment

The Alberta Pork Producers Development Corporation will manage the Canada-Alberta Hog Industry Development Fund (HIDF). The investment of this fund will enhance the competitiveness of our pork industry in domestic and global marketplaces.

The HIDF is one of the mechanisms to help the hog sector reach its vision for the industry as it moves toward the next millennium. The vision:

- To have our industry viewed by society as an environmentally friendly, renewable resource that delivers economic growth, value-added quality products and job creation opportunities while providing nutrients for soil improvement and crop production.

The Canada-Alberta Hog Industry Development Fund Committee has identified priority areas for research opportunities where funding may be available. They are:

Primary Priorities:

- improve public perceptions of our industry and product
- address environmental issues - manure, odour andwater
- position Alberta pork to meet or exceed customer expectations for safe and wholesome meat

Secondary Priorities:

- enhance marketing and value-added
- improve career opportunities for labour and management
- support production research

The HIDF Committee will receive the first round of proposals on or before the December 19, 1997 deadline. Notification of the status of applications will be made by the HIDF Committee to the submitting parties on or before January 30, 1998. The next application deadline is June 26, 1998. Applications may be submitted at any time.

Further information regarding submission of applications and forms can be obtained by contacting either Doug Hall, HIDF chairman, or Ed Schultz, secretary-manager Canada-Alberta HIDF, 10319 Princess Elizabeth Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, T2G 0Y5, (403) 474-8288, fax: (403) 471-8065.

On-line learning

The Farm Business Management Program (FBMP) is working with KenAgra Management Services Ltd in Edmonton to develop a marketing workshop through the Internet. The workshop, called ***Managing the Ups and Downs of Grain and Cattle Prices***, will be available to farmers from Ken Agra's new website at **http://www.kenagra.com**

"Farm managers run complex businesses and are very busy ," says Brenda Brindle of KenAgra. "They are often in remote locations but still need to meet and interact with their peers They also recognize the importance of managing the increased volatility in markets. This course will allow them to learn the tools of using forward contracts, futures and options. There will be a website of resources on canola, barley and cattle. A website discussion area will provide course members with the chance to ask questions, respond to practice examples and discuss topics and learn from peer interactions."

"This is just one distance learning opportunity that will be coming to farmers and ranchers this winter under the sponsorship of the FBMP," says Craig Smith, program representative with FBMP. "Distance delivery of education isn't the total answer to farmers learning needs, but it does provide convenience, flexibility and an alternative."

FBMP is participating with project leaders in other on-line courses this year as well. Some of these include:

- ***Farm Financial Analysis Over the Internet*** focuses on financial analysis skills and learning to use the Internet as an educational tool. The course is offered by Ted Nibourg of Kaniteo Information Services. Information can be obtained at **kaniteo@rrtic.com**
- ***Information for Marketing Results*** is an ideal resource for individuals wanting to develop an information network to support their marketing practices. Dennis Dey is the contact at website - **http://www.kaniteo.com/disted.htm**
- ***Agri-ville Com - the On-line Community*** is a club learning environment that allows participants to meet on-line with other farmers to improve management skills and learn how to use the Internet for learning and information sources. For more information, key in to - http://www.agri-ville.com or contact Delin Sheehan-Millang at **dmillang@ agri-web.com**

All FBMP courses are listed in the Canada-Alberta Farm Business Management Program Guide that was delivered to all rural mailboxes recently. For more information, contact Anita Lunden, provincial coordinator at (403)556-4278, Olds; or FBMP program representatives: Craig Smith (403)626-3448, Glenwood; Nan Bartlett (403)835-4288, Fairview; Arla Trueblood (403)954-3745, Jarvie

Contact: Craig Smith (403)626-3448

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Agri-News Briefs

1997 Farmer of the Year

The Alberta SPCA named Murray Roeske, a hog breeder from the Alcomdale area just north of Edmonton, as the 1997 Farmer of the Year. Each year, the SPCA looks for a full-time farmer who takes exceptional care of his or her animals, both the physical and psychological well-being of the animals is considered. Roeske has been operating his hog operation for 20 years and specializes in breeding purebred Landrace and Yorkshire hogs. He has taken steps to reduce stress for his animals, larger floor pens and keeping original litters together for example. For his humane concern for the well-being of his livestock and for the excellent level of his animal husbandry, Murray Roeske was unanimously selected by the Awards Committee to be the recipient of the Alberta SPCA 1997 Farmer of the Year award. The award was presented at the Awards Ceremony in Edmonton on November 15, 1997. For more information, contact the Alberta SPCA at (403)447-3600, Edmonton.

New home study courses

Training the Next Generation of Farm Managers is the newest home study course offered by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. The resource materials are primarily designed for the farm business owner who has identified a need to train the next generation to become farm managers and business owners. Topics covered include: conflict resolution, communication, negotiation, succession issues, management roles, strategic planning, training plan, job description and more. Alberta Agriculture's home study program offers a variety of agriculture-related courses and software programs for study and use at home. Contact your district office for more information on the courses offered.

AGRI-NEWS

November 24, 1997

How sweet it is

Alberta's fields of clover, canola and alfalfa result in some of the highest yields and some of the best quality honey in the world. While honey is produced in almost all provinces, Alberta continues to be the leading producer.

"Although 1996 wasn't the best of years for honey production in Canada, the latest revised estimate pegged total production at 26,977 tonnes," says Reynold Jaipaul, livestock statistician with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "This is down about 12 per cent from 1995 and is almost 14 per cent below the previous five year average. However, this performance should be viewed as positive as it was achieved despite a harsh and prolonged winter, a delayed, cool spring and a reduction in colony numbers."

Alberta led the way in 1996 with a total production of 9,169 tonnes, slightly over one-third of the Canadian total. Saskatchewan followed with 6,205 tonnes and Manitoba with 4,763 tonnes. Total value of the 1996 honey crop in Canada was estimated at $75.3 million. For Alberta, the comparable value was $25.3 million.

The average national yield per hive in 1996 was 53 kilograms, more than twice the estimated average of 24.1 kilograms reported, for the six major producing countries in the world.

"The 1997 Canadian honey crop is expected to exceed the 1996 level," says Jaipaul. "Preliminary estimates show the total Canadian production to be 30,021 tonnes or roughly 11 per cent higher than in 1996. Production for Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba are forecast to increase to 9,922 tonnes, 6,906 tonnes and 5,647 tonnes respectively."

Worldwide, Canada ranks as the fifth largest producer of honey, behind China, the U.S., Mexico and Argentina. Like Canada, honey production was down in 1996 for China, Argentina, Germany and the U.S. The overall impact of this has been a reduced honey supply resulting in stronger world honey prices.

Contact: *Reynold Jaipaul* *(403)422-3122* *Kenn Tuckey* *(403)422-1789*

Researching a new value-added feed for fish

Research into processing a fish food for Alberta's growing aquaculture industry is underway. The first, small scale trials begin in December, 1997 at the laboratory level where this new feed product will be tested.

"Supply of inexpensive animal feed containing adequate protein, energy and mineral has been a challenge for the fish farming industry," says Dr. Ali Khan, livestock entomologist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

Insects are one source of natural food for fish. The research planned involves growing insects (larva and pupa) in grain

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
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hulls, screenings and grain dust from seed cleaning plants and then rendering the insects into an insect meal. The pelletized meal, which looks like coffee grounds, will then be fed to fish and the growth and protein levels monitored.

Alberta seed cleaning plants process an estimated 30 million bushels of grain each year. The screenings and dust generated by the cleaning process are by-products that have very little commercial value. Screenings are sometimes used in animal feeds or converted into pellets in cattle feed. Grain dust is a waste product of no commercial value.

Grain dust contains seven per cent protein, 20 per cent fibre, 0.5 per cent calcium and 0.20 per cent phosphorus. These nutrients are suitable for rearing insects. Using the hulls, screenings and grain dust as a growing medium, means the insects are reared in a clean environment and they can be converted into insect based protein and used as fish food.

"Preliminary testing shows that this insect meal is 60 per cent protein," says Khan. "Soybean meal, which is commonly used as fish feed, ranges between 40 and 45 per cent protein. The insect meal shows a very promising composition and we will now progress to the next step which is test feeding a selection of commercial fish."

After the initial testing is complete and the results are positive, work will need to be done to develop a method of producing the insect meal on a commercial scale.

"One of the most exciting thing about this project is that it opens up another opportunity for a value-added support industry," adds Khan. "A product such as grain dust can be used by insects to produce a value-added, usable type of insect protein. If the project is viable, the Alberta agriculture industry will be able to grow its own fish food and reduce the reliance on shrimp meal and other imported fish food."

All work to date has been done manually and on a laboratory scale. Once tests are completed and the value of the insect meal determined, we will require some very specific agriculture engineering design and fabrication to bring the project to a commercial level."

Results of this study are expected in June, 1998.

Contact: *Dr. Ali Khan*
(403)427-4572

Herbicide resistant weeds

Herbicide resistance refers to weeds that are not controlled by a specific herbicide or group of herbicides were used to control those weeds in the past.

"Prior to 1988, there were no confirmed sites with herbicide resistant weeds in Alberta," says Trevor Schoff, crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Today, the confirmed sites are entering the hundreds and include weeds such as green foxtail, wild oats, kochia, chickweed, Russian thistle, wild mustard and cleavers."

Herbicide resistance often develops because a small number of weeds naturally occur with resistance to certain herbicides. Repeated use of these certain herbicides on fields containing the resistant weeds selects for resistance because the resistant types survive and produce seed while susceptible types are killed.

"Producers should suspect herbicide resistance if a weed species is not controlled by a herbicide that had previously controlled them but other weeds in the field appear to be controlled," says Schoff. "Other signs of emergent herbicide resistant weeds are weed escapes that can't be explained by adverse weather, sprayer misses or emergence after spraying; irregular shaped patches of a weed species develop and a herbicide gives little or no control; and, when field records show repeated use of the same herbicide or herbicide group."

To avoid or delay resistance on a farm:

- use an integrated weed management approach. Don't rely on only one method of control
- rotate herbicide usage so that the same herbicide group is not used year after year
- use tank mixes that have more than one active ingredient controlling the same weed
- keep accurate field records of crop rotation and herbicides used
- use cultural methods such as cultivation, silage or greenfeed harvesting
- crop rotations using competitive crops like barley or winter cereals can reduce weed levels
- grow forages in your rotation
- sow weed-free seed that has a high germination rate and is vigorous
- banding and seed placing fertilizer will favour the crop over weeds

Additional information on herbicide resistance and on weeds and weed identification is available in both priced and free publications through Alberta Agriculture. The factsheet ***Resistance of Weeds to Herbicides***, Agdex # FS640-8, is available at all Alberta Agriculture offices and at the Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6.

Contact: *Trevor Schoff*
(403)679-1210

Breeding sport horses

The brood mare is an integral part of a horse breeding operation and much care and attention is given to selecting the best possible brood mares especially when breeding for performance and sport horses.

"The horse industry is dependant on furthering the quality, soundness and breed type of the many breeds that make up this amazing industry/hobby/lifestyle," says Les Burwash, manager of equine programs with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "***Selecting the Profitable Brood Mare*** is a subject of great interest to many horse breeders in Alberta. Ken Carson, Valor Farm, will address this subject at the **1998 Alberta Horse Breeders and Owners Conference**."

Ken Carson, born and raised in San Antonio, Texas, worked on a number of yearling buying teams while at *The Thoroughbred Record* for three years. He then established a full time consulting business. In 1989, he worked as pedigree and sales consultant for Three Chimneys Farm near Midway, Kentucky, arranging matings and advising farm clients on the purchase of mares and yearlings. Carson returned to Texas in 1994 to assume the duties of business manager of Valor Farm. Carson is a board member of Texas Thoroughbred Breeders' Association, member of American Horse Council, member of TOBA and member of the Thoroughbred Club of America.

"Carson is one of 15 internationally recognized speakers featured at the 1998 conference," says Burwash. "The annual conference is the premier horse conference in North America and this year's agenda promises to provide a great deal of information for horse enthusiasts in Alberta."

Many other aspects come into play when breeding horses for their performance and endurance traits. Alberta Kley, Riding Master at Spruce Meadows, will address the topic ***Practical Sport Horse Breeding***.

Kley spent many years studying the German system of mating and selecting Hanoverian horses, working under the guidance of some of Germany's most respected horsemen.

"Kley is involved with the selection of breeding animals for Spruce Meadows as well as personally owning a small band of horses," says Burwash. "He is a strong believer in the having quality mares if one is going to be a successful breeder. In sport horses, as with other breeds, quality producing mares are difficult to find but it is important to purchase as good a mare as possible with a pedigree that has proven to produce quality performance horses."

One of the major problems in the sport horse market place is that breeders feel their horses are worth more than the market dictates. Kley will discuss the need for select auctions to assist breeders in determining what horses are worth and the need to present horses properly and professionally at auctions.

The conference is arranged so that attendees can follow four lines of interest – Arabian, Quarter Horse, Thoroughbred and all breeds. Conference participants can attend any of the sessions and will receive the printed materials from all sessions.

The 1998 Alberta Horse Breeders and Owners Conference is held at the Capri Centre, Red Deer, January 10 and 11, 1998. Conference registration is $75 per person. For more information, contact Burwash in Airdrie at (403)948-8532. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE line.

Contact: *Les Burwash*
(403)948-8532

International Ag offices – getting a bang for our buck

The value of world agri-food trade has been expanding steadily over the last couple of decades, up by over 150 per cent from 1980. Alberta's agri-food exports, with tremendous support from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD) have steadily increased as well, from less than $1 billion in 1980 to over $4.7 billion in 1996. That ride is far from over. More liberalized trade environments, fueled by recent multi-lateral trade agreements have created a trading atmosphere like we've never experienced, one that will take us well into the next millennium.

"While there are major opportunities to be had for Alberta's agri-food companies, we are not alone in our battle for a major piece of the pie," says John Cotton, senior trade director - Asia Pacific, with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Stiff competition can be found in all parts of the world, most notably from the United States and Australia. In order to be competitive in world markets, Alberta's agri-food industry requires timely, strategic and accurate market information. The key is to have Alberta agriculture representation in selected foreign countries. That representation is known as international offices."

The selection of these sites is based on a number of factors including how attractive and competitive the market is and what the future holds for these regions. AAFRD currently has international representation in Japan, China, Russia, Mexico, Taiwan and the US northwest. Through these five offices and with the help of AAFRD's marketing services division, Alberta producers and processors can be assisted in understanding the complexities of doing business elsewhere. This can include the foreign country's business culture, regulations, alternative ways to enter the market, overcoming language barriers, adaptation of products, access to targeted customers and advice to business on infrastructure and organizational considerations specific to that foreign market.

Cont'd on page 4

"The cost of maintaining international offices pales in comparison to the benefits of positioning ourselves to be a major player in world agri-food trade," adds Cotton. "We're already well on our way. Alberta producers have the potential to achieve $10 billion in primary production and $20 billion in value-added production by the year 2005. Much of that product will be heading overseas to the very places where Alberta Agriculture international offices are situated."

The price of maintaining these five offices is $494,000.

Contact:	*John Cotton*	*Barb Donadt*
	(403) 422-2789	*(403) 422-7102*

Market strategy for storing grain

Storing grain is a waiting game based on a number of factors. Grain condition, cash flow needs, price levels, market outlook, delivery opportunities, commercial storage charges and interest rates all play a role.

"Long term storage can be profitable if prices rise enough to cover storage and interest costs," says Neil Blue, marketing specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Unless a farmer is paying for commercial storage, the storage cost is limited to the investment cost and depreciation on the farmer's own bins. This physical storage cost can be 10 to 20 cents per bushel per year, depending on facilities."

A more significant cost is applied interest rates. For a farmer with outstanding trade account debt accruing interest at two per cent per month, the interest cost of storing $8/bushel canola in the bin is 16 cents per month or $1 per bushel for just six months. This farmer would need over $9 per bushel six months after harvest to justify the interest costs alone. Another farmer who has no debt may only need a price 25 cents a bushel higher to cover the interest costs of storing the same grain. The risks associated with spoilage and theft of stored grain are the same for all farmers.

"Harvest bids are usually fairly low as grain buyers have no difficulty attracting product," says Blue. "The market signal right now is to store and wait for a stronger basis into winter or look for a deferred delivery contract that offers an acceptable basis. Although cash prices have been edging higher, feed barley basis, discount below the futures price, are weak this fall. Depending on market outlook, farmers may want to consider selling barley on the futures market and watch for a stronger basis to sell their physical barley."

It pays to follow market outlook and be able to sell in stages into a rising market rather than pick the market top and be disappointed as prices eventually fall. Each producer should know what their individual target prices are and write them down. When the market makes its moves, that predetermination of target price will help the producer steady his course.

Contact: *Neil Blue*
(403)853-8101

Agri-News Briefs

CASP update

The Canadian Agricultural Safety Program (CASP) is a four-year, $4 million project that ends on March 31, 1999. CASP funds safety projects that highlight children, build upon current activities and are broadly based. The primary objective is to decrease the level of farm injuries and fatalities across Canada. Application deadlines for provincial projects is December 8, 1997. Projects should be up and running by April 1, 1998 and have a March 31, 1999 conclusion date. CASP is administered by the Canadian Coalition for Agricultural Safety and Rural Health with funding from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. For further information on the program or to submit an application, contact Janet Halberg at Alberta Women's Institutes, #220, 10403 - 172 Street, Edmonton, AB T5S 1K9 or call (403)488-5282.

Ropin' the Web

In early November, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Internet site, Ropin' the Web, was awarded the gold medal for service delivery in the Provinces category at the Distinction '97 Awards. These awards are part of the Government Technology Exposition and Conference in Ottawa. They are the technology industry's salute to excellence in the management of information and technology in the public sector. This national recognition is shared by many Alberta Agriculture staff who are involved in the Ropin' the Web initiative. At the awards, the silver medal went to the Quebec Health Ministry and the bronze went to the B.C. Ministry of Public Works. For more information, contact Ron Weisenburger, program manager, (403)422-1821. Check out the website at **http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca**

International beef symposium

The Lethbridge Research Centre is hosting the International Beef Symposium, ***New Targets for a New Industry***, on January 6 to 8, 1998 at the Lethbridge Lodge. Eight target sessions are planned. Each session features three speakers and cover:

- Tracking beef from pasture to plate
- New controversies in the beef industry
- U.S. cattle seeking Canadian citizenship
- New strategies for tasty, safe and consistent beef
- Getting more mileage out of feedlot cattle diets
- The dramatic potential of genetic markers in cattle breeding
- New strategies for reducing winter feeding costs, and
- Targeting winter feeding programs to changes in weather

The symposium is a snapshot of the many opportunities and industry challenges. Registration is $150 and includes meals and sessions (registration is $175 if paid after December 19, 1997). Beef producers can register by calling Dr. Sylvie Bilodeau-Goeseels (403)317-2290, fax: (403)382-3156, or e-mail: **goeseelss@em.agr.ca**

Outlook Agri-Food '98

The Outlook Agri-Food '98 conference, December 3, 1997 at the Lethbridge Lodge, Lethbridge, and December 5, 1997 at the Capri Centre, Red Deer, focuses on emerging export markets, outlook and opportunities. It provides analysis, forecasts and insights for all sectors; value-added products, services and technologies, and bulk commodities, identifying opportunities throughout the supply chain. Strategies for seizing opportunities and developing innovative *win-win* partnerships will be presented. Speakers include: Tim O'Neill, chief economist, Bank of Montreal; Jacques Pomerleau, executive director, Canada Pork International; Larry McNamara, Canbra Foods Ltd.; Don Heasman, AgriPartners International Grain Processors; Barry Mehr, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development; John Taylor, Canadian Beef Export Federation; Paul Cassidy, Mitcon Inc.; Blair Roth, Alberta Wheat Pool; Aaron Falkenberg, Alberta Chicken Producers; and, Ted Haney, Canada Beef Export Federation. Outlook Agri-Food '98 also offers a superior networking forum. Outlook Agri-Food '98 is sponsored by the George Morris Centre, the Bank of Montreal and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. For additional information, fee information or to register, call toll free 1-800-206-0391.

Barley quality competition district winners

The Barley Development Council announced its district winners at the second annual Malting Barley Quality Competition. The district winners for Alberta in the two-row category are: **Bushell Farms Ltd**, Milo; **Al Kormas**, Cardston; and, **Wayne Ramsey**, Red Deer. From these finalists, an overall provincial winner will be chosen by a panel of expert judges. The overall winner will be announced at the Canadian Western Agribition in Regina, November 23 to 30, 1997. Samples from all district winners will be on display at Agribition. In total, the competition attracted 57 entries from Alberta and Saskatchewan in the six-row and two-row categories. Major sponsors for the competition are Labatt Breweries and the Canadian Wheat Board. For more information, contact Dr. Bryan Harvey, crop development centre, (306)966-5795, Saskatchewan or Dr. Norm Kendall, brewing and malting barley research institute, (204)942-1407, Manitoba.

1997 Alberta sheep symposium

An international roster of speakers is planned for the 1997 Alberta Sheep Symposium, November 28 to 30, 1997 at the Capri Centre, Red Deer. Topics on the agenda include: impact of exotic sheep breeds on the UK sheep industry – Dr. Basil Wolf, Welsh Institute of Rural Studies; genetic markets in sheep - Dr. Jon Beever, University of Illinois; sheep research at the Lethbridge Research Station – Kim Stanford; the influence of prolonged exposure to cold on lactating ewes – Wray Whitmore; the Alberta Suffolk Sire reference scheme – Dr. Cathy Gallivan; update on sheep nutrition – Dr. Steve Mason; extending the grazing season – Susan Hosford; Scrapie, the current situation – Dr. Ron Rogers; and, practical flock health programs – Dr. Paula Menzies, Ontario Veterinary College. Registration for the symposium is $75 for adults or $50 for students. Fees include coffee breaks and lunches, Saturday and Sunday. Banquet tickets are $20 per person. To register, contact Cathy Gallivan (403)224-3962.

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December 1, 1997

CANADIANA

JUL [illegible] 1998

Infused oils – delicious but risky

They make beautiful additions to gift baskets. Oils infused with the essence of garlic, herbs and spices provide fabulous flavor but if not prepared properly, they are high risk products.

"Improper preparation and storage of infused oils can result in *Clostridium botulinum* bacteria which produce deadly toxins," says Simone Demers-Collins, promotion coordinator with Alberta Canola Producers Commission. "If this tasteless, odorless, microscopic bacteria is consumed by humans, the toxins can cause botulism, a food poisoning that can be fatal."

Clostridium botulinum is a naturally occurring bacteria that is widespread and harmless in the presence of oxygen. However, when garlic or herbs containing the bacteria are covered in oil and bottled, the organism thrives in the oxygen-free environment and can produce toxins at temperatures as low as 10°C (50°F).

"Symptoms of botulism include: dizziness; blurred or double vision; difficulty in swallowing, breathing and speaking; and progressive paralysis," says Demers-Collins. "Consumers should check labels and only purchase products that are commercially processed in accordance with government approved methods."

Health Canada has been working with the Canadian food industry to ensure that commercially processed infused oil products are safe. These products should always be refrigerated unless otherwise specified on the label.

"When making infused oils at home, strictly follow food safety guidelines such as:

- make oils in small batches (250 ml/1 cup oil heated in a 796 ml/28 oz tin can)
- heat the prepared oil at low oven temperature (150°C/300°F) for at least one hour, or until garlic browns
- verify the temperature of the oven with an oven thermometer
- cool the mixture before straining and bottling
- refrigerate oils, they may become cloudy but this is harmless
- even refrigerated oils should not be kept longer than one month
- do not leave infused oils at room temperature for any period of time

"The shelf-life of commercially processed infused is similar to that of regular canola oil. Infused oils, on the shelf at room temperature, can be kept for up to one year," adds Demers-Collins. "Once opened, they should be refrigerated unless the label specifies otherwise."

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

For other questions about infused oils, contact the Food Safety Info Line, a project of the Alberta Home Economics Association, toll free at 1-800-892-8333.

Contact: Simone Demers-Collins
(403)469-0002

Stable crop insurance premiums for Alberta forage producers

The governments of Canada and Alberta each committed $10 million to reduce the Alberta Crop Insurance Forage Plan's deficit. Lyle Vanclief, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and Ed Stelmach, Minister of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, say that this $20 million fund will be used to reduce the deficit accumulated during years of drought in the 1980s, 1991-92 and 1992-93.

"Successive years of drought contributed significantly to the deficit in the plan," says Vanclief. "We can't do anything about the weather, but we can help make the current plan more attractive to Alberta forage producers."

"Stable premiums and coverage are an integral part of any insurance product," says Stelmach. "Reducing in the forage deficit along with planned changes to the forage insurance program for 1998, will mean more stable premiums for Alberta producers in the future."

Based on consultations with producers, program changes to forage and crop insurance have been under way for the past two years. Changes to the forage program for 1998 include a revised payment schedule for pasture insurance, price options for pasture that reflect replacement costs, hay coverage based on production over the entire growing season and coverage allowances for "bush pasture" based on locally-assessed carrying capacities.

The contributions by both governments are pursuant to the 1996 federal-provincial framework agreement on agricultural safety nets. Alberta's portion of the money comes from existing provincially-budgeted allocations for safety net initiatives. The Government of Canada's contribution comes from the federal safety net allocation for Alberta of close to $170 million in the 1997-98 federal budget.

Contact: Vern Greenshields
(613)759-1020

Rick McConnell
(403)782-8243

Ken Moholitny
(403)427-3078

Outlook Agri-Food '98

Outlook Agri-Food is a national series of economic agriculture conferences focusing on opportunities open to producers and processors in future export markets. Outlook conferences address the opportunities for the agri-food industry and the implications for farmers, their customers and suppliers.

A highlight of the conference will be a keynote speech by Dr. Tim O'Neill, Bank of Montreal's chief economist. There will also be speeches by Larry Martin, director of economic research for the George Morris Centre, and Jacques Pomerleau, executive director of Canada Pork International.

"Our mission at the George Morris Centre is to provoke quality dialogue on relevant policies and issues and to encourage innovations that enhance excellence in the agriculture and food sector," says Larry Martin. "Outlook Agri-Food brings agri-food sectors together. Beyond the critical information presented, it's an excellent forum for stimulating dialogue, promoting supply-chain relationships and demonstrating the untapped potential of the sector."

This year, the George Morris Centre, together with the Bank of Montreal and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development are sponsoring two economic agriculture conferences in the province. The first will be held in Lethbridge, at the Lethbridge Lodge on December 3, 1997. The second will be held in Red Deer at the Capri Centre on December 5, 1997.

"If you are responsible for planning, forecasting, budgeting or business planning, Outlook Agri-Food '98 is a valuable and beneficial resource," says Peter Brown, senior manager for the Bank of Montreal.

Two of the three Outlook Agri-Food programs were sold out last year. Space is limited this year and time is running out to register. For more information or to register, call the conference's toll-free information line at 1-800-206-0391.

Contact: Alan Hall
(403)340-7611

Farm Fatalities in Canada, 1991-95

The participating members of the Canadian Agricultural Injury Surveillance Program (CAISP) have produced their first five year summary document. ***Farm Fatalities in Canada, 1991 - 1995***, documents the work in monitoring farm injuries in Canada.

"The report stemmed from the efforts of many individuals and groups," says Rob Brison, director CAISP, Queens University, Kingston, Ontario. "Members of CAISP hope this report will assist groups working toward a reduction in the frequency and

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severity of farm injuries across Canada. The information, collected on an ongoing basis, monitors the effectiveness of prevention programs, shows recurrent patterns of injury across the country and provides a clearer understanding of what causes tragic farm injuries."

The report is the first comprehensive report on Canadian farm fatalities that has ever been produced. It covers the period of time from 1991 to 1995 and includes data collected from all 10 provinces. The data collected shows trends and patterns in farm injuries and fatalities that can be clearly linked to new technology and new machinery. Having this factual information may help companies and provincial farm safety programs identify areas of concern before the accidents begin to happen.

"The report describes the magnitude of the farm fatality problem in Canada and identifies important patterns associated with these fatalities," says Brison. "There are an average of 120 deaths each year and 1,800 to 2,000 hospitalizations from Canadian farms. When a fatality occurs on a farm, it often means that the owner/operator is killed and the business is threatened. Fatalities in other businesses, although just as tragic, are not necessarily a threat to the business. This is one of the only industries in the country where work-related injuries and fatalities have such a direct impact on the success of individual businesses."

In Alberta, the Farm Safety Program is involved with agricultural societies, industries, associations and communities to increase awareness of the importance of farm safety.

"Data collected on a national scale is very useful to individual provinces," says Solomon Kyeremanteng, farm safety program manager with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "This report will help us identify trends and emerging safety hazards. It will also help us to focus our activities on areas of the greatest concern."

Copies of the report are available for $10 by calling Lisa Hartling, national coordinator at the CAISP national office (613)548-7388, Kingston, Ontario.

Contact: *Rob Brison* *Solomon Kyeremanteng*
(613)548-7388 *(403)427-4227*

Marketing hay

When considering marketing hay, there are several key points producers should keep in mind. Knowing the type, composition and weight of bales is essential when selling hay.

"If selling hay is likely an every year occurrence, building up a relationship with repeat buyers makes the process a whole lot easier," says Allan Macaulay, forage specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Probably the first thing producers should consider is the type of bale they have for sale. The type of bale available, large round, small round square or small square, has a direct bearing on the market open for consideration. Small square bales can be handled by hand and have a significant advantage in the small holding market or specialized operations. Small round bales are too expensive to haul any distance but may be fine for short haul."

Producers need to know what bales weigh, the composition of the bales and the moisture content. Customers will want specifics in each of these areas. Just as producers wouldn't sell livestock or grain without a weight on it, hay needs to be weighed. This is best done by hauling a few bales to a scale or borrowing a scale with a platform and getting a reading on the variation between bales and figuring out an average weight.

"Make sure the hay is dry – between 14 and 15 per cent moisture. Hay at a higher moisture may not keep properly and can get dusty or even rot," says Macaulay. "Let the customer know up front the condition and composition of the hay. If it's had some rain on it let the buyer know. Things such as composition, percentages, rain exposure and price per bale or per ton should all appear on the bill of sale."

Customer confidence increases when bales are uniform and well-shaped. It is a sign that care and attention have been given the product. Wrap the bales properly and adequately. There is a correlation between the number of wraps and the ability to shed water.

"If a producer is trying to capture the top end of the market, the hay bales should be tarped," adds Macaulay. "Tarping should be done so that air can still get into the stack and clear condensation away. Use specialized hay tarps and keep them tight."

Feed testing for specialty markets, dairy in particular, can mean extra return on hay. Analysis should be done for moisture, acid detergent fibre (ADF) and protein. ADF is very important as it tells how digestible the hay is. Lower ADF is better for milking and growing cows and there is less waste.

"The more weed-free hay is the better," says Macaulay. "Some weeds are a big problem, tansy and scentless mayweed for example. If these weeds are present, be sure to tell the buyer and again, list it on the bill of sale.

"Don't leave anything to chance," says Macaulay. "Know the market you want to attract and actively pursue it. If you have dairy quality hay, let the dairy producers know you have what they need. If you have hay the alfalfa plants would want, a list of these plants is available from the local Alberta Agriculture forage specialist. Know what you've got and market it accordingly."

The General Store section of the Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development Internet site is a great resource for both buyers and sellers of hay, straw and feed. Getting in contact with buyers that need hay and are willing to pay the requested price is important. All Alberta Agriculture offices have access to this Internet site and can help producers list their hay.

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Producers can post their hay from home with Internet access. The address is **http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca** Once on site, go to the **General Store** section, click on **To have a listing posted** and follow the instructions on screen.

Contact: Allan Macaulay
(403)674-8213

Agri-News Briefs

Alberta retail food prices

The Alberta retail food prices, as of June 1997, have been compiled and published by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. The statistics and production economics branch compiles Alberta retail food prices for several communities three times each year. The report establishes a historical series of retail food prices for several communities across Alberta. The survey data provide accurate and reliable regional information on food prices and total food costs. The report is also used in programs involving food security issues, prenatal nutrition programs, programs for people with special nutrition needs such as diabetics and general nutrition education. For more information or copies of the report, contact Maureen Wenger (403)422-2903 or Linda St. Onge (403)986-4793.

Banff Pork Seminar

Responding to Challenge is the theme for the 1998 Banff Pork Seminar, January 13 to 16, 1998 at the Banff Centre, Banff, Alberta. The agenda features speakers of international caliber who are recognized authorities in their field. The seminar is designed for participants interested in improving their knowledge and decision-making abilities in pork production. Early registration (before December 12, 1997) is $165 plus GST per person, after December 12, registration is $215 plus GST per person. When registering five people from the same organization/farm/company, a sixth complimentary registration is offered. For more information, contact Aileen Reilly at (403)492-3236; fax (403)492-9130 or e-mail: **areilly@afns.ualberta.ca**

FARM '98

Future Agriculture Resource Management '98 will look at future production technology. The seminar scheduled for January 28, 1998 at the Heritage Inn, Taber, is presented by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Alberta Sugar Beet Growers Marketing Board and the Alberta Wheat Pool. Topics include: herbicide resistance; crop specific irrigation management; grain market forecast; getting the most out of soil testing; and, future transgenic crops. For more information on the seminar, contact Jack Payne at (403)223-7907.

Coming agricultural events

Forage Research Workshop
Westlock Inn
Westlock, December 2 - 3
Loreen Cunningham (403)443-7544

Alberta Applied Research Association Annual Meeting
Westlock Inn
Westlock, December 3 - 4
Debi Nonay (403)349-4546; fax: (403)349-5937;
e-mail: growest@telusplanet.net

Seed Protectant Pesticide Applicator Certificate Course
Olds College
Olds, December 3 - 5
Phone: (403)556-4684 or fax: (403)556-4711

Outlook Agri-Food '98
Capri Centre
Red Deer, December 3 - 5
To register: 1-800-206-0391

Farm Succession Planning Resource Fair
Black Knight Inn
Red Deer, December 4
Dean Dyck (403)340-7007

Farm Succession Planning Resource Fair
Strathmore Family Centre
Strathmore, December 5
Ted Darling (403)948-8524

Capitalizing on New Opportunities – New Nutrition Recommendations
Sheraton Centre Hotel
Toronto, Ontario, December 11
To register: (416)777-2020 or fax: (416)777-1292,
Toronto, Ontario

Brave New World -- Western Canada Wheat Growers Assoc. 1998 Convention
Kananaskis Village
Kananaskis Country, January 7 - 9
WCWGA Head Office (306)586-5866, Regina, Saskatchewan

Farm Succession Planning Resource Fair
Provincial Building
Medicine Hat, January 8
Brad Smith (403)223-7907

Alberta Horse Breeders and Owners Conference
Capri Centre
Red Deer, January 9 - 11
Les Burwash (403)948-8532;
e-mail: burwash@agric.gov.ab.ca

Holistic Management Comprehensive Course
Lethbridge, January 12 - 16
Randee Halladay (403)729-2472

Banff Pork Seminar
Banff Centre
Banff, January 13 - 16
Aileen Reilly (403)469-4902, Edmonton,
e-mail: reilly@oanet.com

Seed Plant Convention
Westin Hotel
Edmonton, January 15 - 17
CSGA Alberta Branch General Manager,
Bill Witbeck (403)782-4641

Alberta 4-H Leaders' Conference
Red Deer Lodge
Red Deer, January 16 - 18
Penny Wilkes (403)427-4514; e-mail: wilkes@agric.gov.ab.ca

Northwest Food Processors 8th Annual Convention & Exposition
Oregon Convention Centre
Portland, Oregon, U.S.A., January 18 - 21
David Pahl (503)639-7676, Portland, Oregon;
fax: (503)639-7007; e-mail: nwfp@nwfpa.org

Holistic Management Comprehensive Course
Red Deer, January 19 - 23
Randee Halladay (403)729-2472

Precision Farming ... come put the pieces together!
Fantasyland Hotel
Edmonton, January 21 - 22
Dale Chrapko (403)853-8226, Vermilion; fax: (403)853-4776;
e-mail: chrapko@agric.gov.ab.ca

Taste of Success – improving rural food processor's products workshop
Food Processing Development Centre
Leduc, Program deadline – January 23
Kerry Engel, rural development specialist, (403)349-4465,
Westlock

Provincial Agricultural Service Board Conference
Mayfield Inn
Edmonton, January 27 - 29
Audrey Gall (403)322-3831, Nampa, fax: (403)322-3000

Managing Agriculture for Profit 1998
MAP '98 Growing Alberta
Capri Centre
Red Deer, January 28 - 30
Curtis Weeks (403)578-3970, Coronation

Agri Future Farm Technology Expo – Fields of the Future
Sustainable crop management and direct seeding conference and trade show
Westerner Park
Red Deer, February 4 - 6
Russ Evans 1(800)251-6846 or (403)572-3600, Carbon

Exploring Organic Alternatives, meeting the challenges of agriculture, health and community
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, February 8 - 10
Hart Haidn (250)785-3300 or e-mail: hhaidn@sun.pris.bc.ca
Joanne Kowalski (306)996-8893 or e-mail: jck@fc.usask.ca

Holistic Management Two-day Workshop - Goal Setting
Capri Hotel
Red Deer, February 16 - 17
Randee Halladay (403)729-2472

Holistic Management Two-day Workshop – Cropping using holistic management principles
Capri Hotel
Red Deer, February 18 - 19
Randee Halladay (403)729-2472

Holistic Management Two-day Workshop – Planned Grazing
Capri Hotel
Red Deer, February 23 - 24
Randee Halladay (403)729-2472

Holistic Management Two-day Workshop – Financial Planning
Capri Hotel
Red Deer, February 25 - 26
Randee Halladay (403)729-2472

Holistic Management Two-day Workshop – Making Decisions
Capri Hotel
Red Deer, March 2 - 3
Randee Halladay (403)729-2472

Alberta Poultry Industry Council Annual Meting
Capri Hotel
Red Deer, March 2 - 4
Roger King (403)488-2125, Edmonton

1998 Western Canadian Dairy Seminar, 16th Annual
Capri Centre
Red Deer, March 10 - 13
Department of Agriculture, Food & Nutritional Science, U of A
(403)492-3237; fax: 492-9130; e-mail: reilly@aonet.com
Internet site: http://www.afns.ualberta.ca/wcds

Trails to 2000
1998 Farming for the Future Conference
Medicine Hat Lodge
Medicine Hat, March 12
Joan Unger, conference coordinator, (403)422-6555 or fax: (403)427-3252

Alberta Pork Congress - PORK '98
Westerner Park
Red Deer, March 17 - 19
Margorie Zingle (403)244-4487, Calgary

Northwest Food Service Show
Seattle Kingdome
Seattle, Washington, U.S.A., March 21 - 23
Johanna Cramer (503)625-6256, Wilsonville, Oregon;
toll free: 1-800-645-7350;
fax: (503)625-6938; e-mail: foodshownw@aol.com

North American Conference on Pesticide Spray Drift Management
Holiday Inn by the Bay
Portland, Maine, March 29 - April 1, 1998
Tammy Gould (207)287-2731; fax (207)287-6558;
e-mail: **aftgoul@state.me.us** or **Tammy.Gould@state.me.us**; or visit the homepage at http://www.state.me.us/agriculture/pesticides/

The Second International Symposium on Egg Nutrition and Newly Emerging Ovo-Bio Technologies
Banff Centre
Banff, April 5 - 8
Linda Callan (403)492-0169

Whoop-Up Quarter Horse Circuit
Lethbridge & District Exhibition Pavilion
Lethbridge, April 17 - 19
Twyla Gurr (403)328-4491; fax (403)320-8139

Bubbles In Food - International Conference
University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology
Manchester, U.K., June 9 - 11
Dr. Grant Campbell - Ph: +44 161 200 4472, Manchester, U.K; fax: +44 161 200 4399;
e-mail: g.campbell@umist.ac.uk
Internet site: http://www.ce.umist.ac.uk/centres/bubbles.htm

Alberta Poultry Producers' Workshop
Red Deer Lodge
Red Deer, June 16 - 18
Warren Chorney (403)250-1197, Calgary

Pacific Northwest Grain & Feed Association Annual Meeting & Conference
Sun Valley Resort
Sun Valley, Idaho, U.S.A., June 20 - 24
Jonathan Schlueter (503)227-0234, Portland, Oregon;
fax: (503)227-0059; e-mail: cwulff@transport.com

Alberta Branch CSGA Annual Meeting
Westin Hotel
Edmonton, June 28 - 30
CSGA Alberta Branch General Manager,
Bill Witbeck (403)782-4641

4th International Triticale Symposium
Red Deer Lodge
Red Deer, July 26 - 31
Don Salmon (403)782-4641; fax (403)782-5514, Lacombe
e-mail: **salmon@agric.gov.ab.ca** or
don.salmon@agric.gov.ab.ca

Ninth International Wheat Genetics Symposium
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, August 2 - 7
Pierre Hucl (306)966-8667, Saskatoon, SK;
Dr. Doug Knott (306)966-4953, Saskatoon, SK
Internet: http://www.usask.ca/agriculture/cropsci/winter_wheat/9th_iwgs/

Unity in Diversity, Annual Holistic Management Conference
Ponoka Legion
Ponoka, August 5 - 7
Cindy Hudson (403)372-2190, Bashaw

Model-it: Application of Modelling as an Innovative Technology in the Agri-Food Chain
Wageninge, Netherlands, November 29 - December 2, 1998
Maarten Hertog, e-mail: M.L.A.T.M.HERTOG@ATO.DLO.NL or
MODEL-IT2ATO.DLO.NL
For more information check the homepage at: http://www.bib.wau.nl/ato/modelit

Editor's Notes:

1. Alberta communities host a number of local fairs. Because there are so many, they are not listed here. However, an annual list of agricultural society fairs is compiled by the agricultural education and community services branch. The booklet is available by writing Alberta Agriculture Publications Office, 7000-113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6. Please quote Agdex #007.
2. Alberta's agricultural colleges conduct a variety of short courses, workshops and seminars throughout the year. Please contact them directly for a list.
    - Fairview College at (403)835-6605 or e-mail registrar@fairviewc.ab.ca
    - Lethbridge Community College at (403)320-3311
    - Olds College (403)556-8355 e-mail for **The Connection** 73543.2137@compuserve.com
    - Lakeland College (Vermilion) (403)853-8400

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Coming agricultural events notice

1. Do you know of any provincial (Alberta), national or international agricultural meetings, conferences or conventions **in 1998 or 1999**? Please give the **name** of the event.

2. What are the **dates**?

3. **Where** is the event being held? Include city or town; hotel and convention centre if known.

4. Please give the name, city or town, and phone number of a **contact person** for each event listed.

5. This form has been completed by (organization). Please include **your telephone number**:

Please return this form by *February 20, 1998* ***to:***
Agri-News Editor
Communications Division
J.G. O'Donoghue Building,
7000 - 113 Street
Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6
Fax: (403)427-2861 or e-mail: palutke@agric.gov.ab.ca

Coming agricultural events is published four times a year in ***Agri-News***.
The next list will be published in the **March 2, 1998** edition.

Coming events are also updated regularly on Alberta Agriculture's Internet home page http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca

AGRI-NEWS

December 8, 1997

CANADIANA

DEC 17 1997

Stop a killer – STOPDED

Dutch Elm Disease (DED) is distributed over most of the native range of American elm in Canada. Elms are not native to Alberta and are largely confined to man-made urban and rural landscapes. Alberta is one of the last areas in North America to have a large population of DED free elm trees.

"DED moves rapidly and can kill individual trees in as little as three weeks. Once it has a stronghold in an area where no prevention program is in place, a whole population of elms in a community can be destroyed within a decade," says Janet Feddes-Calpas, Dutch elm disease coordinator with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "DED was first recorded in North America in Ohio in 1930. By 1944 it was detected in Quebec followed by Ontario in 1948. In 1975 it had reached Manitoba and appeared in Saskatchewan by 1981."

The Society to Prevent Dutch Elm Disease (STOPDED) is a nonprofit organization with members that include nurserymen, landscapers, commercial and municipality arborists, provincial and municipal parks staff, research scientists and other interested Albertans. The goal of the Society is to preserve and protect Alberta's elm trees from this deadly disease. They have cooperated with Alberta Agriculture to set up a province-wide DED prevention program.

DED is caused by a fungus, *Ophiostoma ulmi*, that clogs the elm tree's water conducting system, causing its leaves to wilt and the tree to die. The fungus is spread from one tree to another by two species of insect vectors, the smaller European elm bark beetle (SEEBB) *scolytus multistriatus* and the native elm bark beetle (NEBB) *hylurgopinus rufipes*."Because we are finding the SEEBB in the province and since we are surrounded by DED infected areas to the south and east of us, Alberta has been working hard on this prevention program," says Feddes-Calpas. "The beetles breed in dead and dying elm trees and elm firewood. Once they have pupated and turned into adults, they leave their brood gallery and fly to healthy elms to feed. In this way, they transport the fungus on their bodies from one tree to the next. In 1975, Alberta declared DED and the two beetle carriers of the disease as pests under the Agriculture Pests Act."

Part of the province wide program involves taking an elm inventory and increasing public awareness in all municipalities. The six larger municipalities, Edmonton, Calgary, Red Deer, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat and County of Strathcona, have a DED prevention program in place and are members of STOPDED. Currently, each is responsible for performing these duties in their buffer zone, which includes a number of smaller municipalities around the city limit. STOPDED has hired six employees that make up three crews to work in the remaining municipalities in the province.

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

"All municipalities are encouraged to develop a DED prevention program," says Feddes-Calpas. "The public can help prevention efforts by not storing elm firewood and by pruning all dead wood out of their elm trees. Dead elm wood with bark attached provides elm bark beetles breeding habitats and lead to the spread of DED. It's essential to properly dispose of all elm wood and any elm stumps as soon as possible by burning or burying it. Pruning should be done only between October 1 and March 31 when the beetles are not in their active stage."

For more information call an Alberta DED hotline:

Calgary	(403)221-4686
Edmonton	(403)496-6905
Lethbridge	(403)320-3075
Lloydminster	(403)825-6184
Medicine Hat	(403)529-8333
Strathcona County	(403)467-5800 (ext. 3315)
Red Deer	(403)342-8234
Provincial line	(403)310-0000 and ask for 362-1300

Contact: Janet Feddes-Calpas
(403)362-1337

Hay and straw predators

Be on the lookout for hay and straw predators, and they aren't the four-legged kind. They take advantage of a farmer's trusting nature, leaving the farmer with empty promises of payment or cheques that are not worth the paper they're written on.

"There are unscrupulous characters that use lists and information sources to target unsuspecting producers," says Allan Macaulay, with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "They may pay cash for a number of loads then leave an NSF cheque the next purchase. They could phone and say they are half an hour behind the trucker, their vehicle broke down and they'll be there in a few minutes, tomorrow or next week. Unfortunately, they never show up with payment. They may be offering top dollar and package deals but producers end up getting none or only part of the money."

Farmers must be very careful when selling feed. Cash, certified cheques or bank drafts are usually safe enough. Talking to a banker to get his ideas is a good move. Always get the name, address and license numbers of the trucker and have the trucker sign a receipt – make sure you keep a copy of the receipt for your records and files.

"It's a terrible thing when people in this business get taken advantage of," adds Macaulay. "Fortunately, these dishonest predators are fairly rare but they can show up anywhere."

If an uncertified cheque is given in payment, don't let the hay leave until the cheque has cleared the farm bank account. If asked, banks will notify you when a cheque has cleared. This can take a week or more, talk to your banker for clarification on this.

Exceptions to this rule could be when selling to established companies such as hay processors or feedlots. Be sure to verify the buyer and that the load is going to the right place.

Contact: Allan Macaulay
(403)674-8213

'Snow-how' keeps it clean

Food processors in Alberta have a new, award-winning technology to add to their options in treating smelly, nutrient loaded wastewater. Food processors could find Alberta's cold winters an advantage for treating their wastewater while recycling the nutrients to crop land using Snowfluent® technology.

"Researchers with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development have positive results from the first tests in Canada using Snowfluent® on food processing wastewater," says Neil MacAlpine, project manager and water management engineer with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Similar results were achieved in Maine on tests on potato processing wastewater, resulting in construction of a permanent Snowfluent® facility for McCain's Foods. The Snowfluent® technology won the Canadian Consulting Engineers' 1997 Schreyer Award, their top technical award."

"Snowfluent® is a proven technology that treats wastewater by turning it into snow," says Jeff White, CEO and president of Delta Engineering Ltd., the company developing Snowfluent®. "These tests confirm that as water freezes into very small droplets in our patented water treatment process, contaminants are precipitated from the water in a process we call *atomizing freeze-crystallization*. The process works for municipal wastewater and these tests show that our technology is a cost-effective solution for industrial wastewater as well."

"Odour and water quality improvements are significant," says MacAlpine. "Raw wastewater from the Westcan Malting plant at Alix that had high levels of organic matter, nutrients and bacteria, was put through a test. After Snowfluent® treatment, the meltwater had reductions of 60 to 90% in the nutrients compared to the raw wastewater and virtually 100% kill on the bacteria. The Snowfluent® technology makes winter our ally in eliminating odour from lagoons and reducing wastewater treatment costs."

Dr. Dennett Netterville, general manager for Delta Engineering's Edmonton office agrees, "Wastewater from food processing plants is usually full of organic matter and nutrients. Many food processors try to recycle those nutrients back onto crop land through irrigation. However, if the

Cont'd on page 3

wastewater has to be stored in ice-covered municipal lagoons through the winter, all those nutrients and organic matter decompose and use up the water's oxygen. Once the oxygen is gone, the decomposition produces smelly gases that are released when the lagoons' ice cover breaks up in the spring. Snowfluent® treatment would empty the lagoons before spring breakup, eliminating that odour problem. These tests show that it won't create another odour problem in the field where the snow is made."

Odour problems at spring breakup were Westcan Malting's motivation in cooperating in this research. Byron Michelson, financial officer with Westcan Malting, arranged for hauling wastewater to the Alberta Research Council, Vegreville, where the snow plots were made.

"Westcan Malting, like many Alberta food processors, is expanding rapidly but we need to find a wastewater treatment option that is cost-effective and eliminates odour," says Michelson. "When MacAlpine and Netterville approached us about a pilot test with Snowfluent® we decided the technology was worth a look. Our present system includes irrigation to return the nutrients to crop land. We like the aspect that Snowfluent® also recycles nutrients to land to grow forage."

Dave Ritchie, processing component coordinator, Canada Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture (CAESA), the program that funded the pilot test, believes the testing was very timely based on the public demand for environmentally friendly food processing plants. "Our program was designed to help processors find good environmental solutions for food processing wastes. Snowfluent® is another tool to help us meet our objective of producing clean food from a clean environment," says Ritchie.

"The pilot test didn't answer every question but it was successful enough that we are recommending production scale tests with a food processor in Alberta," adds MacAlpine. "We're working hard at getting set up for a production scale test that would fill the gaps from the pilot test."

Alberta Agriculture's report, *Snowfluent® Treatment of Malting Effluent*, is available from Netterville or Jeff White, Delta Engineering, by faxing a request to (403)471-3918 or (613)521-8533.

Contacts: Neil MacAlpine (403) 427-3779

Dr. Dennett Netterville (403) 471-4281

Seedy Saturday

As they ready for winter, gardeners in Alberta have recently covered up perennials, cleaned out annual beds, mulched garden plots and taken steps to protect ornamental shrubs and bushes. But, it's not too early to be planning for next year.

Seedy Saturday is a grassroots dynamic event that offers new information and seeds for everyone. It happens in many communities across Canada and brings together home gardeners, native plant societies, botanical gardens, organic growers, university and government researchers, local and international groups involved in seed conservation efforts

"Traditional crop conservation is an important component of global biodiversity conservation strategies. Part of that conservation effort is the harvest and sharing of seeds," says Susan Penstone, event coordinator. "The focus of Seedy Saturday is the *swap table* where people can swap and share their favorite seeds and stories. However, it's not necessary to bring seeds as there are local seed companies selling open pollinated seed varieties. Vegetables, flowers, cereals and herbs that grow well in the region are swapped, sold and shared in communities across Canada."

The focus of Seedy Saturday is on heritage, heirloom and traditional open pollinated varieties. Open pollinated plants breed true generation to generation; hybrid seeds are often good for only one generation and if they set seed, the seed may be sterile or unlike that of the parent plant. Many heritage plant varieties grow well in low input and organic gardens. These old varieties offer consumers taste, nutrition and appearance options to conventional food and flower items.

"Small seed companies that sell open pollinated varieties are invited to sell seeds at these events," says Penstone. "Many people who attend their first Seedy Saturday have never saved their own seeds and others find it easier to buy than to swap. But those who do save their own seeds will want to mark their calendar for the Seedy Saturday event closest to them."

Educational displays and free talks throughout the event strengthen links between people and organizations involved in seed and biodiversity conservation. In many communities, heritage fruit, animals and wheats can be found at Seedy Saturday events.Communities wishing to set up their own Seedy Saturday should send a self-addressed, stamped business-sized envelope (SASE) to Box 1406, #194, 3803 Calgary Trail, Edmonton, AB T6J 5M8.

Edmonton's fourth annual Seedy Saturday is planned at Grant MacEwan Community College, City Centre Campus, 10700 - 104 Avenue, Bldg. 6, on Saturday, March 7, 1998 between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Admission is by donation

The Edmonton event is a non-profit event, coordinated this year through the Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, with funding assistance through the CAP program, Environment Canada. The work supports the goals of Seeds of Diversity Canada, a non-government organization dedicated to conserving open pollinated varieties.

For more information on Edmonton's Seedy Saturday, contact Susan Penstone by phone/fax (403)892-4743.

Contact: Susan Penstone
(403)892-4743

Horse conference in Red Deer

Each year in Alberta, the horse industry section of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development organizes the ***Alberta Horse Breeders and Owners Conference***. This event is the premier horse conference in North America. The 1998 conference is scheduled for January 10 and 11, 1998 at the Capri Centre in Red Deer.

"The 1998 conference is an event Alberta horse enthusiasts will really enjoy," says Les Burwash, manager of equine programs with AAFRD. "The internationally recognized speakers on the agenda and the chance to meet and talk to other horse breeders and owners make the conference an event well worth attending."

The topical issues that will be addressed at the 1998 conference include:

- *Forging the Future for the 21st Century* – Don Burt, past president of the Alberta Quarter Horse Association
- *Horse Industry Trends* – Dr. Mathew McKay-Smith, Equis magazine
- *Alliances in the Horse Industry* – Gary Carpenter, executive with the American Association of Equine Practices
- *Ownership in the Horse Industry* – Dr. Steve Jackson, Kentucky Equine Research
- *New Horizons in Fitness and Training* and *Your Horse is What He Eats* – Dr. Don Topliff, Oklahoma State University
- *C.O.P.D., Causes and Advances in Treatment* – Dr. Hugh Townsend, Western College of Veterinary Medicine
- *Dental Care for Performance Horses* – Dr. Leon Scrutchfield, Texas A&M
- *Normal and Abnormal Behaviour in Stabled Horses* – Dr. Sue McDonnell, New Boulton Centre
- *Is Your Stud a Dud* and *To Castrate or Not – That is the Question* – Dr. Jan Rosser, University of California
- *Semen Transport* – Les Burwash, horse industry section, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
- *Practical Sport Horse Breeding* – Albert Kley, Spruce Meadows
- *Selecting the Profitable Broodmare* – Ken Carson, Valor Farms
- *Fitting the Saddle to the Rider* – Ken Cameron, KC Saddlery
- *Bits and Bitting* – Greg Darnall, Darnall Bits

"This year there are four main areas of interest covered by our guest speakers, breeding; the horse industry and ownership; new training practices; and, tack and equipment," adds Burwash.

While many follow the program designed for a particular breed preference, Arabian, Quarter Horse, Thoroughbred and all breeds, conference participants can attend any of the sessions and will receive the printed materials from all sessions.

"Each year, a special, social event is planned for the conference and this year we are very pleased to have John Scott present *Horses in the Movies* on Saturday evening," says Burwash.

Conference registration is $75 per person. For more information about the 1998 conference, contact Burwash in Airdrie at (403)948-8532. Government numbers are toll-free by dialling 310-0000 to connect to a RITE line.

Contact: *Les Burwash*
(403)948-8532

Agri-News Briefs

Turkey Temptations

The Alberta Turkey Producers have produced a brand new recipe brochure for cooking Alberta turkey parts. The publication includes a section on roasting whole birds and helpful hints and recipes for what to do with leftovers. If a whole bird doesn't always fit the timetable, turkey parts make a delicious alternative. A turkey breast is ideal for smaller gatherings of four to six people and turkey tenderloins can make a nice change in the family menu. To receive a free copy of the brochure, write to: ***Turkey Temptations***, Alberta Turkey Producers, #212, 8711A - 50 Street, Edmonton, AB T6B 1E7.

Canadian grocery shoppers

The Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors (CCGD) has released a study of shopper attitudes and behavior. The report shows that cleanliness is the most important attribute of a supermarket. Some of the statistics noted in the report are:

- the average Canadian family spends $103 on groceries a week, up only $3 since 1995
- fewer Canadians have sought out 'environmentally sound' products and fewer have joined product or store boycotts
- debit cards are an important factor in supermarket choice. Supermarkets currently handle 30 per cent of all debit card transactions
- the beginning of a trend to order groceries by fax or Internet was also noted in the report

By interviewing shoppers across Canada, some very interesting trends emerged. Ready-to-eat meals have almost tripled in the last two years due to the variety and selection available and the higher consideration consumers put on convenience. Men lead the trend in this area. In answer to this trend, whole meal solutions may be increasingly offered on the store shelf. Consumers may see stores grouping foods less by department and more by meal suggestion in the near future. Copies of the survey are available for $45 plus GST by writing to France Bessette at CCGD, P.O. Box 1082, Place du Parc, Montreal, QC H2W 2P4.

Farmland values

Canadian farmland values vary from province to province. The Farm Credit Corporation's (FCC) ***Farmland Values*** shows that Alberta's farmland value has increased by 36 per cent since July, 1993. The semi-annual (January 1997 to July 1997) increase in farmland value in Alberta was 5.2 per cent. Manitoba recorded the highest increase, 8.9 per cent over the same six month period. The report says that in southern Alberta, the demand for land has been strong, especially in irrigated areas. This demand is largely due to the returns realized for specialty crops grown on the irrigated land. Northern Alberta also experienced increased land values. The growing livestock industry and a healthy provincial economy have both been factors in the land market in Alberta. For further information or to receive a copy of ***Farmland Values***, contact the FCC at (306)780-3490, Regina, Saskatchewan.

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AGRI-NEWS

December 15, 1997

MAP '98

Canada's leading agricultural business management conference is being held at the Holiday Inn, Red Deer, on January 27 to 29, 1998. Managing Agriculture for Profit (MAP) is an opportunity to learn about and discuss critical issues affecting farm business.

"This year marks the 20th anniversary of MAP," says Jean Wilson, business development adviser with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The agenda for MAP '98 features many excellent speakers who will address issues such as changing market trends, building partnerships and financing alternatives. To start the conference off with a bang, Dennis McKnight, market researcher and futurist, will throw out the first challenge by asking attendees, '**Are you ready for a changing world**?'"

McKnight has undertaken several research projects for many industry leaders in the areas of food and agriculture, such as McDonalds' Restaurants, AgroEvo, Canada Safeway and Alberta Pool. His background and client base allow him to understand the food industry from the farm to the kitchen table.

"Right from this first presentation, the conference will get producers and processors thinking about the customer and what influences their decisions," says Wilson. "The conference will also focus on how technology will influence Alberta farms and how demographic and technology changes will impact the rural community."

The conference and its presentations are designed to get producers and processors thinking about the exciting possibilities of the future. Other speakers on the MAP '98 agenda include: Jerry Bouma, Edmonton management consultant, addressing changing trends in food and agriculture; Mike Leslie, Nakodo Consulting, on developing a market focussed mind set; and,Gordon Colledge, a dynamic speaker, closes the conference with a challenge to work closely together.

"The highlight of the conference is always the producers and processors who share their experiences on how they are managing change," adds Wilson. "The sessions, discussions, idea sharing and networking have a unique way of leaving all attendees inspired."

MAP '98 is organized by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and Alberta Financial Services Corporation with major support from the Agriculture and Food Council and the Alberta Pool.

For program and registration information, call toll free 1-800-387-6030.

Contact: Jean Wilson
(403)415-2146

Carmen Andrew
(403)742-7500

This Week

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Publishing Branch

Agri-News™ is published weekly. Reprinting of articles is encouraged. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. A typewritten edition with wider line-spacing is available to media editors upon request. Editor – Lee Anne Palutke

Changes to Alberta safety net programs

Changes to the province's comprehensive package of agriculture safety net programs were made in response to the concerns of producers in northern Alberta.

"We feel that Alberta Crop Insurance, along with the Farm Income Disaster Program (FIDP), Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC) disaster and lending programs and the federal Net Income Stabilization Account program, offer Alberta farmers the best combination of risk management programs available," says Ed Stelmach, Minister of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "However, farmers in northern Alberta are facing extreme financial hardship as a result of two unusually wet years in a row. They needed more flexibility, and we've been working hard to find a solution that addresses their concerns."

While no new programs were announced, a five-point plan was released that includes:

- an expanded crop insurance claim advance for crops that cannot be harvested;
- a revised disaster assistance loan program at seven per cent interest for farmers experiencing financial difficulties due to multiple years of crop losses;
- a more flexible Developing Farmer loan program to restore working capital and restructure financing;
- faster processing of FIDP claims for farmers in northern Alberta with severe financial pressures; and,
- financial counselling services available to all producers requiring assistance.

"In making changes to these programs, it's important to keep our international trading obligations in mind," adds Stelmach. "We cannot return to the days of ad-hoc programs without running the risk of trade complaints. We can, however, give Alberta farmers more choices in the risk management programs we have in place and that's what we've done."

Costs relating to the revised Disaster Assistance Loan Program will be funded from the existing budget.

Farmers who need more information on these program adjustments are encouraged to contact their local AFSC office.

Contact: Ron Glen
(403) 427-2137
Frank Blush
(403) 679-1354
Andrew Church
(403) 679-1301

Details of Alberta safety net program changes

The following Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC) programs are able to respond to the needs of producers in northern Alberta:

Post Harvest Claim Advance for Crop Insurance – addresses cash flow issues for snowed under areas and allows for payment of up to the full amount of a claim, depending on the acreage left to harvest. In 1996, AFSC implemented a post-harvest repayable advance of up to 50 per cent of the estimated claim.

Since some areas were snowed under two years in a row, the need for cash flow assistance has increased. To respond to this need, AFSC has added additional flexibility to pay claims in 1997 as follows:

- lesser of five per cent or 20 acres remain unharvested – finalize post-harvest claim and pay 100 per cent of loss
- five to 50 per cent of the crop remains unharvested – pay up to 100 per cent of loss
- more than 50 per cent of the crop remains unharvested – pay up to 75 per cent of loss
- for crops with low yield estimates (8 bushels or less for cereals and 4 bushels or less for oilseeds) – finalize as a post-harvest claim and pay 100 per cent of loss

Disaster Assistance Loan Program/Crop Loss Option – will be an ongoing option under AFSC's existing Disaster Assistance Program. It addresses multiple years of crop losses from unfavourable weather conditions, it provides immediate cash flow relief and restores working capital where farming operations are in financial jeopardy. Principal and interest payments are deferred for the first two years. All interest is amortized over the remaining balance of theloan period. It is anticipated that over 600 farms will be eligible for an average of $60,000, repayable over 10 years.

Developing Farmer Program – provides flexibility to address a wide range of financial needs including restoration of working capital and financial restructuring.

Farm Income Disaster Program (FIDP) – offers support to producers whose margin between their agricultural income and eligible expenses suffers more than a 30 per cent drop in one year compared to their previous three-year average. Application forms are available in early January, 1998. Farmers looking for some assistance as they fill out they their FIDP forms are encouraged to approach a local AFSC office.

Financial Counselling – this service will continue being offered to all producers requiring assistance in resolving financial difficulties.

For more information on these program adjustments contact the local AFSC office.

Interest rates for Beginning Farmer Program lowered

Interest rates under the Beginning Farmer Program (BFP) are being reduced to 7½ per cent, beginning on April 1, 1998.

"This rate reduction ensures that the program continues to meet the needs of new and existing beginning farmers developing and maintaining viable farm operations," says Ed Stelmach Minister of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "The program must not only assist beginning farmers to get started, but also provide them long term stability."

The Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC) is able to finance lower interest rate loans as a result of its ability to obtain lower commercial interest rates and Alberta's preferred credit rating. AFSC is passing these savings on to its customers.

The current gap in interest rates between the BFP and short-term commercial lending rates means that some beginning farmers have been putting themselves at financial risk by refinancing long-term loans over shorter terms to take advantage of the lower interest rates. To address this gap, interest rates for BFP loans are being reduced from nine per cent to 7.5 per cent, effective April 1, 1998.

"We believe these changes will significantly help beginning farmers in managing their risk so that they'll be able to afford to get into the business of farming," says Stelmach. "Stability in entry-level agricultural operations helps the farmer, the industry and future growth in the primary and secondary processing sectors."

For customers in the first five years of their loan term, the net interest rate after applying the BFP incentive will remain unchanged at six per cent. The incentive will be lowered to 1.5 per cent from three per cent.

Contact: *Ron Glen*
(403) 427-2137
Frank Blush
(403) 679-1354
Andrew Church
(403) 679-1301

A warm, dry November in Alberta

November weather was warm and dry. The overall provincial average temperature was 2.4 degrees above normal and the provincial average precipitation was well below normal for November in Alberta.

"The warm, dry conditions are typical of what can be expected in Alberta when *El Nino* occurs," says Peter Dzikowski, agri-weather specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

The November provincial average precipitation was 6.9 mm. This amount was 12.8 mm below the 1961 to 1990 average of 19.7 mm for November, which is usually the second driest month of the year.

"The northwest region of the province was the driest, reporting only 21 per cent of normal November precipitation," adds Dzikowski. "All regions reported below normal precipitation in November. Amounts of 0.6 to 17.6 mm, or five to 83 per cent of normal were reported. Lethbridge Airport recorded precipitation closest to normal, with 13.5 mm of precipitation or 83 per cent of normal."

The provincial average temperature was 2.4 degrees above the 1961 to 1990 average of -4.8 degrees C. Most Alberta locations reported monthly average temperatures ranging from one to four degrees above normal. The averages are based on data recorded at 45 Environment Canada climate stations across Alberta.

Elk Island reported the greatest temperature departure in Alberta, 5.9 degrees above the monthly average of -7.6 degrees for November.

For more information on typical *El Nino* conditions check Environment Canada's Internet site at **http://www.mb.ec.gc.ca/Nino/PNR_charts_English.html**

For more information on Alberta's climate, check Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Internet site at **http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/climate**

Contact: *Peter Dzikowski*
(403)427-3594

Equine nutrition and fitness

Nutrition and fitness for horses, especially performance horses, are continually expanding sciences. Keeping up with product knowledge and new techniques, although important, is a demanding task.

"At the 1998 Alberta Horse Breeders and Owners conference, Dr. Don Topliff, an expert in equine nutrition, fitness and training, is one of our featured speakers," says Bob Coleman, provincial equine specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Topliff will address two subjects at the conference: *New horizons in fitness and training* and *Your horse is what he eats*."

Topliff, who works out of Oklahoma State University, is a board certified nutritionist with the American Registry of Professional Animal Scientists and a leader in exercise physiology for horses. His research looks at the basic elements associated with exercise and its effects on a horses' overall fitness, energy use and bone density

Cont'd on page 4

"The information Topliff will share on basic nutrition for horses, from birth to maturity, can be of great benefit and use to breeders and owners," adds Coleman. "In his session, he focuses on helping horses reach their full potential."

An accomplished horseman who has judged the World Quarter Horse Show three times and judges across North America, Europe and Australia, Topliff is one of 14 internationally recognized speakers on the agenda for the 1998 Alberta Horse Breeders and Owners Conference held at the Capri Centre, Red Deer, January 10 and 11, 1998.

While many follow the program designed for a particular breed preference, Arabian, Quarter Horse, Thoroughbred and all breeds, conference participants can attend any of the sessions and will receive the printed materials from all sessions. Conference registration is $75 per person. For more information about the 1998 conference, contact Les Burwash in Airdrie at (403)948-8532. Government numbers are toll-free by dialling 310-0000 to connect to a RITE line.

Contact: *Les Burwash*
(403)948-8532
Bob Coleman
(403)427-5096

The best turkey, ever!

A turkey dinner is one of the most economical meals you can serve. But, because we don't cook turkey often, there can be concerns about handling, cooking and storing it.

"To help with preparations, there are some tips for buying, handling, and cooking the holiday turkey you should keep in mind," says Linda St. Onge, nutritionist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "All turkeys sold in retail outlets are federally inspected and graded and the packaging is marked Grade A or Utility. Grade A turkeys are young, and have a near perfect appearance. Utility turkeys are also young, but their appearance may be marred by a missing drumstick, wing, or have torn skin."

To help calculate what size turkey to buy, count on about five servings per kilogram of turkey. If you're having 25 people for dinner, you'll need at least a 5-kilogram bird. Of course, it doesn't hurt to buy a larger turkey and plan some delicious meals later!

"If you're buying a fresh turkey, refrigerate it and cook it within three days," says St. Onge. "Never thaw a turkey at room temperature. The best place to thaw a frozen turkey is in the refrigerator. It takes about 10 hours per kilogram thawing time in the fridge."

Another alternative is immersing the turkey, with the original plastic wrap left on, in a sink of cold water. The water can be changed every hour and should always feel cold. Allow two hours thawing time per kilogram. Refrigerate thawed turkey until you cook it. Be sure to rinse the turkey inside and out before stuffing.

"It's fine to make your stuffing ahead of time, but don't stuff the bird until just before you put it into the oven," says St. Onge. "It's not that the stuffing itself is unsafe, but once it's in the turkey, you have a very large, dense mass. It takes a long time for the internal temperature to be hot enough to kill bacteria. During that length of time, bacteria can multiply very quickly and you could have the whole family sick with food-borne illness."

To cook, place the turkey breast side up on a rack in a roasting pan, brush with melted butter or oil and roast at 325°F (160°C). The birds is done when a meat thermometer inserted into the inner thigh, not touching the bone, reads 180°F (82°C) for a stuffed turkey and 170°F (77°C) unstuffed.

As soon as the turkey is cooked, remove the stuffing from the cavity. Put it into an oven-proof container and keep it hot until you serve your holiday dinner. For easier carving, allow the turkey to stand 20 minutes before carving.

Once supper is over, it's important to get turkey left-overs into the refrigerator. Sitting at room temperature is the surest way to encourage food-borne illness. Refrigerate any stuffing and gravy, too.

"Alberta farmers produce some of the best turkey in the world," says St. Onge. "Look for an Alberta address on the package, and you can be sure your getting quality. Have a safe, delicious, holiday turkey dinner!"

For more information on food safety, contact the Food Safety Information Hotline at 1-800-892-8333, Edmonton 490-0647 and Calgary 287-0098.

To receive a free copy of the ***Turkey Temptations*** brochure, that includes some great turkey recipe ideas, write to: ***Turkey Temptations***, Alberta Turkey Producers, #212,
8711A - 50 Street, Edmonton, AB T6B 1E7.

Contact: *Linda St. Onge*
(403)986-4793

Competition still exists in Alberta hog markets

Although the Maple Leaf Meats plant in Edmonton has closed, the processing industry in Alberta is expanding to accommodate all the hogs that Alberta producers can send to market.

"Our preference is that producers will still sell to hog processors here, to keep processing jobs in Alberta," says Ed Stelmach, Minister of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "In addition to the current large plant in Red Deer, there are a number of smaller provincially and federally-inspected plants capable of processing Alberta hogs."

Cont'd on page 6

Fletcher's Fine Foods, Red Deer, is moving quickly to expand its capacity through a transition to double-shift operations that began on November 17, 1997. Currently, the plant is capable of processing 30,000 hogs per week. The company plans to move to a capacity of 40,000 hogs processed per week on a double shift.

Right now, about 48,000 hogs go to market every week, including live exports of about 4,000. Alberta's provincially and federally-inspected plants are capable of processing 37,000 hogs, leaving a temporary processing shortfall of about 7,000 hogs.

"Alberta producers can be assured that processors are expanding their capacities to slaughter as quickly as possible As well, we're confident that another processor will see the obvious cost-production benefits and marketing opportunities of locating a federally-inspected processing plant for export production in north-central Alberta," says Stelmach.

The greater Edmonton region already has access to an abundant supply of hogs, good transportation links and a highly-skilled labour force that should be attractive to another processor.

Contact:	*Ron Glen*	*Dennis Glover*
	(403) 427-2137	*(403) 427-2166*

Agri-News Briefs

Swine stockhandlers' workshop

Good boar management and timing breeding for the best results are the topics at the ***Swine Stockhandlers' Workshop*** being held at Olds College, Trades and Technology building, room 406, on January 13, 1998 from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.. The workshop is an opportunity for stock people in the swine industry to hear the practical aspects of research presented at the Banff Pork Seminar. Dr. Billy Flowers, North Carolina State University, will be using a video to illustrate good boar management. Bas Kemp, Wageningen Agricultural University, Netherlands, will be addressing factors that influence the best time to breed sows. Admission for the workshop is $20 per person and $10 per person for each additional person from the same farm. Please register by January 9, 1998. For more information or to register, contact Michelle Follensbee at (403)415-0828, Edmonton; fax (403)427-1057; e-mail michelle.follensbee@agric.gov.ab.ca

Wheat growers convention

The 28th annual convention of the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association (WCWGA) is being held in Kananaskis, Alberta on January 7 to 9, 1998. The theme for this year's conference is *Brave New World*. An international slate of speakers is planned and topics such as: marketing in the New World; the next round of international trade talks; industry innovations; and, biotechnology. The Wheat Grower convention has traditionally been a forum for new ideas and innovation and 1998's agenda will ensure that tradition is kept up. For further information or to register, contact the WCWGA at (306)586-5866; fax (306)586-2707.

Precision farming

A prairie-wide conference and trade show, *Precision Farming – come put the pieces together*, brings the latest information and new technology on precision farming together in one place. The conference is being held at the Fantasyland Hotel, Edmonton, on January 21 and 22, 1998. Session are designed to bring the hardware, software and reality side of management strategies, machinery and soil fertility together. Registration is $110 plus GST per person and includes a ticket to the banquet, student registration is $40 plus GST per person does not include banquet ticket. Seating is limited. Early registration is advised. Further details on the conference and a registration form can be found on Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Internet site at **http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/event/precision.html**
For more information, contact Dale Chrapko (403)853-8226, Vermilion; fax (403)853-4776.

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AGRI-NEWS

December 22, 1997

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Safeguarding greenhouse vegetables from microbial problems

Contamination of alfalfa sprouts with salmonella and improper preparation and storage of infused oils resulting in *Clostridium botulinum*, are recent examples of microbial problems in foods. Until recently, food contamination was generally associated with pesticides. More problems are now being reported as different types of micro-organisms show up in fresh food.

"There may be different sources of contamination," says Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza, greenhouse crops specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "For example, alfalfa seeds were contaminated with salmonella bacterium which is widely distributed in nature. With the increased use of chicken manure as a source of fertilizer, the risk for contamination has increased.

Dr. M. Aqueel Athar, director of food and public health microbiology at Norwest Labs, advises that water used for washing vegetables is the major source of contamination. He adds, "Generally, it's not the water used for irrigation but rather the water used for foliar feeding, pesticide spraying, fruit rinsing and fruit transport that cause contamination. If chicken manure is used as a source of fertilizer in the field, water can easily get contaminated if vegetables are washed in the field."

"Alberta's greenhouse vegetable industry has a reputation for quality and it's quality that is responsible for the huge growth in Alberta markets," says Mirza. "Safeguarding this reputation is essential to ensure continued growth in the greenhouse vegetable industry. If products cause food borne illness in consumers, this reputation can be destroyed overnight."

Greenhouse vegetables are not washed with water so we have not seen any cases of microbial contamination in Alberta. However, we must take measures to assure continued safe food for consumers.

To be proactive, Alberta growers of fresh vegetables should consider adopting the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) procedure. This procedure identifies where potential problems can arise and how to avoid them.

Greenhouse growers can contact Dr. Mirza (403)415-2303 or Dr. Atha 1-800-661-1645 for further information on HACCP.

Contact: Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza (403)415-2303
Dr. M. Aqueel Athar 1-800-661-1645

This Week

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
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Precision farming ... come put the pieces together

Precision farming is coming to the Fantasyland Hotel, January 21 and 22, 1998.

"Various speakers and trade show participants will present information to farm managers, extension personnel and the agriculture retail industry to let them put the pieces of precision farming (hardware, software and reality) together," says Dean Kupchenko manager Parkland Conservation Farm and conference and tradeshow host. "The two days will be packed with information from experts and the those experienced in precision farming."

Speakers such as Dr. James Lowenberg-Deboer and Dr. Dave Mulla bring years of experience in precision farming to the conference. There will also be a local flavor presented by Jim Robins, a producer near Blackie; Allan Andrukow, a producer near Viking; and, Murray Green an Alberta Agriculture specialist. An update on the precision farming activities going on across the Prairies is the highlight of the first day.

The tradeshow brings in businesses from across Western Canada as well as some American companies that specialize in precision farming. Software and hardware companies, consultants, agriculture retail, governments and colleges will all have representatives at the tradeshow. The tradeshow is open both days.

"Precision farming has the potential to reduce farm costs and environmental impacts by allowing farm managers to apply inputs only where needed at appropriate rates for cropping or grazing/forage situations," says Dale Chrapko, co-organizer of the event.

While advertising original and retrofit equipment for cropping situations has given precision farming the most profile, precision farming can enhance grazing systems, too. Doug Johnson from Oregon State University will address rotational grazing using GPS technology.

Other conference topics include addressing the economics of precision farming, software selection issues, on farm demonstration results, hardware considerations, precision spraying and precision farming in the real world.

Register early as seating is limited. For more information and to register, please contact Dale Chrapko, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development at (403) 853-8226. The conference agenda and a registration form can be accessed on the Alberta Agriculture Internet site at **http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/event/precision.html**

Contact: Therese Tompkins
(403)427-3588

Turning manure into snow reduces odors

The Alberta Pork Producers Development Corporation (APPDC) leads the way in North America in testing of new wastewater treatment technology. Snowfluent®, a new Canadian technology, won the Schreyer Award in 1997, the top technical award of the Canadian Consulting Engineers of Canada. Installations across North America are treating municipal and food processing wastewater, but the test at Dana Giebelhaus' farm near Vegreville, last February, was the first on liquid hog manure.

Researchers with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development report that odors and nutrients are significantly reduced using the Snowfluent® technology on liquid hog manure. However, nearly all the ammonia dissolved in the water was lost to the air in the pilot test. Overall, results are promising and production scale testing is recommended. Pork producers could find Alberta's cold winters an advantage in eliminating odours from liquid manure and separating cleaner water from nutrient enriched solids.

"Snowfluent® is a proven technology that treats wastewater by turning it into snow," says Jeff White, CEO and president of Delta Engineering Ltd., the company developing the technology. "These tests confirm that as water freezes into very small pellets in the patented water treatment process, volatile gases like the odors in liquid manure are stripped from the water. Other contaminants are precipitated from the water in a process called *atomizing freeze-crystallization*. We know that process works for municipal wastewater. This test shows that our technology is a cost-competitive solution for pork producers who must control odor in lagoons and at field spreading."

Dana Giebelhaus' 300 sow farrow to finish operation had a single cell lagoon with a capacity of 1.5 million gallons. Liquid manure was drawn off the top 18 inches without agitating the lagoon.

"We thought that solids in the manure might plug the nozzles in the snow making guns. For the test, there was no straw in the lagoon and the nozzles handled barley husks without problems," reports James Wuite, water quality analyst with Alberta Agriculture. "However, we processed a liquid manure fraction with very little solids. Consequently, most of the nitrogen in the manure was water-soluble ammonia, not nitrate in solids. The Snowfluent® process expands the surface area of the treated wastewater by 30,000 times in freezing tiny ice pellets. That makes it very efficient at stripping volatile gases like manure odors and ammonia."

"There are still options to explore to capture more of the ammonia into the solids, but the odor and water quality improvements are significant," says Neil MacAlpine, water

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management engineer and project manager, Alberta Agriculture. "After Snowfluent® treatment, the meltwater had reductions of around 60% in nutrients compared to the liquid manure and virtually 100% kill on the bacteria. The Snowfluent® technology makes winter our ally in processing liquid manure. It can eliminate odor from lagoons and produce meltwater and solids that have substantially less odor."

Blain Middleton, chair of the research committee, Alberta Pork Producers Development Corporation, says: "One of the reasons Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development was able to do this research was the short turnaround our committee provided to get timely funding to the project. Alberta pork producers invested just under $13,000 on this test. This investment and being first with Snowfluent® testing show that Alberta pork producers are taking the lead on environmental issues."

"There is a lot of interest from Ontario, Quebec, the U.S.A. and Europe in the results from this test," says Dr. Dennett Netterville, general manager for Delta Engineering's Edmonton office. "That illustrates Alberta's leadership. Delta Engineering knows it has a cost-competitive solution for odor and water improvement plus solids separation. We look forward to production scale testing to show that the Snowfluent® technology is a good fit with conventional manure storage and management systems. We believe we can do a better job of retaining ammonia too."

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's report, ***Snowfluent® Treatment of Liquid Hog Manure***, is available from Delta Engineering Ltd. Orders can be faxed to (403) 471-3918 or (613) 521-8533.

Contacts: Neil MacAlpine
(403) 427-3779
Ed Schultz
(403) 474-8065

Dr. Dennett Netterville
(403) 471-4281

Industry growth study report released

A consultant's report on future growth opportunities and challenges in the agri-food industry over the next several years was recently released by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

"Any time you're looking at growth of the magnitude contemplated for the agri-food industry, there are going to be challenges," says Ed Stelmach, Minister of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "As a follow-up to the study, I have instructed my department to issue a request for proposals on the next phase, an environmental impact study that will evaluate potential environmental challenges connected with growth in the agriculture industry.

The study is called ***The Pursuit of Quality!: A Sustainable Growth Strategy for the Alberta Agri-Food Sector***. The report shows that the Alberta agri-food sector has considerable potential to grow in both its primary and value-added sectors. Included is growth coming from higher yielding cereal crops, higher yielding and better quality oilseeds and increased acreages of speciality and horticulture crops and products. The value-added processing of these products holds a potential for future processing opportunities. Much of the anticipated growth will be through the expansion of key livestock sectors, beef and hogs, and further processing of consumer-ready products.

The challenges are to continue acting in an environmentally responsible manner, ensuring adequate research is in place for crop and livestock development, making sure financial capital is available and that labour, as it relates to all aspects of the agri-food industry from production through to processing, is available.

The study contains more than a dozen recommendations. These include:

- government and industry taking a leadership role in environmental sustainability to assure responsible growth and development of agricultural production and processing facilities
- increasing research and innovation, including developing Alberta as a leading authority in not only crop and livestock product research, but also product ideas for nutraceuticals and functional foods
- identifying and implementing leading food safety and quality assurance programs that meet or exceed "best practices" found in competing countries or markets.

The study identifies that while there is considerable potential for expansion of crop and livestock operations in parts of the province, more work needs to be done, such as compiling detailed inventories of regional resources including groundwater supplies.

The Industry Growth Study was conducted by Toma and Bouma Management Consultants at a cost of $75,000. Copies of the study are available from Alberta Agriculture's Processing Industry Division (403) 427-3166.

Contact: Ron Glen
(403) 427-2145

Doug Radke
(403) 427-2137

Environmental impact study proposals being accepted

Alberta's agriculture and food industry has identified market opportunities for agriculture and food products that would see the industry grow to $10 billion at the primary production level and $20 billion at the processing level. This scale of expansion requires more intensive use of inputs and possibly some land use changes. This expansion must be managed responsibly to prevent significant environmental impact.

"An ***Industry Growth Study*** was commissioned by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development to identify potential sub-sector growth scenarios," says Brian Colgan, chairman, Environmental Impact Study Group, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "It was completed in November, 1997 and identified several growth scenarios.

"The ***Environmental Impact Study*** (EIS) is a follow-up to the Industry Growth study. The EIS will evaluate potential environmental challenges associated with growth in the primary and value-added agriculture industry in Alberta."

The deadline for requests for proposals is **January 13, 1998.**

The objectives of the Environmental Impact Study are two-fold:

- to conduct an analysis (quantitative and qualitative) of potential environmental impacts as a result of agriculture and food industry expansion at the primary and secondary levels in Alberta
- to identify pro-active measures that government and industry can take to accommodate growth in an environmentally sustainable fashion

The maximum budget is expected to be $150,000.

Contact: *Brian Colgan*
(403) 422-4596

Evaluating stallions

Much thought and research goes into breeding the best mares to the best stallions. Breeders must often ask themselves 'What makes a good stud horse?'. One of the evaluation criteria is fertility.

At the ***1998 Alberta Horse Breeders and Owners Conferen***ce, Dr. Jan Roser, University of California, will address the comparative aspects between the normal, sub-fertile and infertile stud.

"Dr. Roser's main focus of research is on infertility in stallions," says Bob Coleman, provincial equine specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "In her two presentations at the conference she will look at management and how to cope with problem horses."

Roser, who just returned from a trip to Japan where she spoke to horse breeders in the Orient, is one of 14 internationally recognized speakers on the agenda for the ***1998 Alberta Horse Breeders and Owners Conference*** at the Capri Centre in Red Deer, January 10 and 11, 1998.

While many follow the program designed for a particular breed preference, Arabian, Quarter Horse, Thoroughbred and all breeds, conference participants can attend any of the sessions and will receive the printed materials from all sessions.

Conference registration is $75 per person. For more information about the 1998 conference, contact Les Burwash in Airdrie at (403)948-8532. Government numbers are toll-free by dialling 310-0000 to connect to a RITE line.

Contact:	*Les Burwash*	*Bob Coleman*
	(403)948-8532	*(403)427-5096*

Family farms responding to change

The ability of family farms to respond to changing consumer and food industry needs and concerns is the greatest challenge facing family farm agriculture. Dr. Larry Janssen, professor of Economics at South Dakota, made this prediction in 1991 and the challenge of change is still key.

"The challenge of change will be the biggest opportunity and potential threat family farms will contend with for the next 20 to 30 years," says Jean Wilson, business development adviser with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Responding to change is the theme that runs through the 1998 Managing Agriculture for Profit (MAP) conference in Red Deer, January 27 to 29."

The conference kicks off with Dennis McKnight, a futurist, to get people thinking and excited about the possibilities of the future.

"Jerry Bouma, an Edmonton management consultant with Toma and Bouma, has identified eight key trends that are impacting the national and international demand for food products," says Wilson. "He will discuss these trends at the conference and show how they affect Alberta farms."

Presentations from five organizations, moving in new directions in the Alberta agri-industry, round out the agenda.

"A highlight of the conference is the producers and processors sharing their stories on how they've met the challenge of change," adds Wilson. "Whether by diversifying, adding value, entering new markets or trying new ways to partner and co-operate, all have overcome obstacles as they moved in new directions. The conference is a chance to learn from others' setbacks and successes and to draw from their enthusiasm."

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MAP '98 is organized by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and Alberta Financial Services Corporation, with major support from the Agriculture and Food Council and the Alberta Pool.

For program and registration information, call toll free 1-800-387-6030.

Contact: *Jean Wilson* *(403)415-2146*
Carmen Andrew *(403)742-7500*

Agri-News Briefs

Banff pork seminar

Responding to Challenge is the theme of the 1998 Banff Pork Seminar, at the Banff Centre, January 13 to 16, 1998. The seminar features speakers of international calibre. Delegates will receive essential information on boar and sow fertility, effective aids to decision making, challenges in nutrition, addressing environmental concerns and risk factors in a competitive pork industry. Single registration is $215 plus GST. For further information or to register, contact Aileen Reilly at (403)492-3236; fax (403)492-9130; e-mail **areilly@afns.ualberta.ca**

International beef symposium

The Lethbridge Research Centre is hosing one of the year's most informative beef meetings. *The International Beef Symposium -- New Targets for a New Industry* is being held at the Lethbridge Lodge Hotel on January 6 to 8, 1998. The symposium, designed specifically for producers, features top scientists and industry leaders from Canada and the U.S. speaking on the major topics shaping the beef industry. For more information, contact Dr. Sylvie Bilodeau-Goeseels (403)317-2290, Lethbridge; fax (403)382-3156; e-mail **goeseelss@em.agr.ca**

RTW makes the most of info technology

The Canadian Information Productivity Awards is an annual competition to find visionary individuals and organizations that effectively use information technology. This year an Award of Excellence in the Internet Commerce category went to Ropin' the Web, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Internet site. The site was nominated by IBM. Other winners in the category are Aetna Insurance, MicroAge and the Royal Bank of Canada.

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